THE ROMANCE OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

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THE ROMANCE OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

בראשית

GENESIS.

CAPUT I. א

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ׃ וְהָאָרֶץ א 2
הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם׃ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי־ 3
אוֹר׃ וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין 4
הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ׃ וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים ׀ לָאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ ה
קָרָא לָיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד׃ פ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמָּיִם וִיהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין 6
מַיִם לָמָיִם׃ וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם 7
אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לָרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי־
כֵן׃ וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ שָׁמָיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר 8
יוֹם שֵׁנִי׃ פ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקָּווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד 9
וְתֵרָאֶה הַיַּבָּשָׁה וַיְהִי־כֵן׃ וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים ׀ לַיַּבָּשָׁה אֶרֶץ י
וּלְמִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב׃ וַיֹּאמֶר 11
אֱלֹהִים תַּדְשֵׁא הָאָרֶץ דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב מַזְרִיעַ זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי
עֹשֶׂה פְּרִי לְמִינוֹ אֲשֶׁר זַרְעוֹ־בוֹ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן׃
וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב מַזְרִיעַ זֶרַע לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֹשֶׂה־ 12
פְרִי אֲשֶׁר זַרְעוֹ־בוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב׃ וַיְהִי־ 13
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי׃ פ

First Page of a Hebrew Bible. Genesis I. 1–13.

THE ROMANCE OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

BY THE
REV. WILLIAM H. SAULEZ, M.A., B.D.
RECTOR OF NINFIELD

WITH FRONTISPIECE

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PREFACE

THE title of this book, "The Romance of the Hebrew Language," explains the kind of readers to whom it is addressed. It is meant to be a popular introduction to the most interesting language our world has ever known, and the object of putting forth such an introduction is in order that the public may be acquainted with some of the curious and fascinating marvels that are to be found in that language which represents the original wording of the Bible. Except in the frontispiece, which is shown as a specimen, there is not a word in Hebrew characters from one end of the book to the other, and this fact alone is enough to save the reader from any fear or suspicion that he is being asked to read a book which he is not likely to understand.

The memory of three happy years spent within the walls of dear old "T. C. D.," and the perpetual kindnesses received from the best of college tutors, the Rev. T. T. Gray, now Senior Fellow, suggested the dedication of this book to either the college or the tutor. However, the plan and the idea of the book are novel, and so it is necessary to wait and see how it is received by the public before being able to decide whether such a dedication would be

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received as a compliment, or as a fitting acknowledgment of the gratitude which the author has always felt towards both the "Alma Mater" and the genial tutor.

W. H. S.

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NOTE.—The present writer had collected notes from many sources for his private use long before he thought of publication, and therefore craves indulgence if mention has been omitted in the above list of any book he has used in the following pages.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.V.	Authorised Version.
R.V.	Revised Version.
P.B.V.	Prayer Book Version of the Psalms.
MS.	Manuscript.
Cf.	Compare.

All Scripture references are taken from the Authorised Version, except where it is otherwise stated.

INTRODUCTION

THE first and most essential qualification of a book is that it shall have a message to deliver, and the object of an Introduction is to inform the reader what kind of message is intended. Whether this book succeeds in delivering its message or not remains to be seen, but its object is to show the intense pleasure of the subject that is discussed when once it is fairly grasped. The subject is the Romance of the Hebrew Language, and the Bible is the only literature we have to-day in that language. In other words, the material from which the subject is taken is familiar to all, and that gives the writer a great advantage to start with. Instead of having to introduce a new friend who might be received coldly and with a certain amount of suspicion until he had won a footing, he simply goes back to a Book with which all are familiar, and says, " Here is a very old friend, one you have known as long as you can remember, and you have never yet had it in your power to give him the greeting he deserves, or to acknowledge the sparkling brilliancy of his conversation. So far he has only spoken to you through an interpreter, and except for one or two

phrases and a few names you have never yet had direct communication with him himself. You have known each other indirectly for a long time, but even now you do not understand him, for you never had opportunity to do so." Such briefly is the object of this book, to acquaint the vast Bible-reading public with some of the romance and delightful wonders of the language in which their Bible was originally written that they may show the old friend truer and deeper veneration.

That is the message of this small book, and so far as the present writer is aware, no one has forestalled him in sending the message. There are plenty of books already written on the Hebrew language, any amount of commentaries and well-written articles explaining the meaning and force of the Hebrew in particular passages, but these always pre-suppose a certain proficiency in the knowledge of Hebrew. These writers have always written on the system, " First learn Hebrew and then we will talk to you about it." Apply the same kind of argument to any other branch of knowledge, say Astronomy, and it is the same thing as saying, " First build an observatory and procure a good telescope, and then we will tell you about the stars and the wonders they disclose." How many would there be in the kingdom by such a system as that who would know anything about the marvels of Astronomy? Very few indeed; and that is why Hebrew has been left severely alone. Nobody has yet tried to address the thousands who, perhaps, have

never seen a Hebrew Bible, and have certainly never learned a page of Hebrew grammar in their lives. Nobody has yet come forward to awake interest in the Hebrew language by explaining the treasures it contains to those who have never learned it.

The mere fact that the idea is new, that there is no track of previous writers to follow, exposes the present attempt to all the more criticism; some versed in the subject will wonder why certain interesting points have been omitted, and others perhaps will complain that undue emphasis has been placed on points that scarcely need so much attention. But still, some one must make a beginning, and when that beginning is made, others, no doubt, will take up the subject; they will benefit by the criticisms made, and carry the writer's intention to good effect. It matters very little who the messenger may be; the important thing is to get the message delivered, and to acquaint the readers of God's Word with something of the wonders which that Word conveys to the human mind when it is read in the very language in which it was given to the world.

Nothing could speak better for that marvellous translation of the Scriptures in 1611, and known as the Authorised Version, than that its connection with Hebrew should be entirely ignored by so many, and we can only speak of that translation with fond respect as the worthy offspring of a still more worthy mother. Even in our own day the work of

these Stuart Divines is held up as a standard of our tongue. "The English language acquired new dignity by it, and can hardly be said to have acquired additional purity since. It may be compared with any translation in the world without fear of inferiority; it has not shrunk from the most rigorous examination, and its excellence is best shown in the fact that it challenges investigation and invites criticism." Indeed, the work of those translators was done so well that there was no longer the pressing need of former days to consult the original, and the period at which the Authorised Version came into general use marks the date at which the study of Hebrew declined in England. Before that period every candidate for Holy Orders was required to learn Hebrew at the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, but after that time the study of Hebrew fell gradually into disuse, and is only now reviving. The revival has set in with all the energy that follows a long rest, and so fascinating are the results of modern scholarship that this small cluster of grapes is offered to the public in the hope that they may see for themselves that the land they are invited to enter is one worth conquering and making their own.

CHAPTER I

THE HEBREW LANGUAGE

LET us now suppose that the reader is taking a Hebrew Bible in his hand to look at for the first time in his life. Two points will immediately strike his attention. The first, and this will be no small surprise to him, is that a Hebrew book begins where our English books end ; what we would call the last page of the book is in Hebrew the first page, and our first page would be their last. The reason of this is because in English we read from left to right ; but the Jew, looking to the north, and following the course of the sun in the sky overhead, got into the habit of reading from right to left, and so each line begins at the right side of the page, and the book commences at the right-hand end instead of at the left.

The second impression that will strike his notice is how different in appearance the letters are from those to which he is accustomed, whether in English or any other European language. There is a special reason for this difference. Our letters are arbitrary signs of the sounds which we want to produce, but in Hebrew every letter was meant to be a little

picture in itself, and the picture was a representation of the letter wanted, it was the first letter of the word which that picture was called. D, for instance, was called Daleth, Daleth means Door, and the first letter of the word was the picture of a door; and to make the alphabet still easier for the child to learn, all these pictures were taken from objects familiar to everybody, such as parts of the body, or parts of a house, or tools found in a house.

When our grandfathers were taught their alphabet in the nursery they were told that—

> A was an Archer who shot at a frog,
> B was a Butcher who kept a Bull-dog, etc.,

and many a time must their young minds have wondered why A should be an Archer any more than an Apple or Adder. In the Hebrew nursery the system was better devised, for each letter was a picture of the thing itself; thus to make a rhyme of it—

> Aleph was an ox, and here is its head,
> Beth is the house where we all go to bed,
> Gimel is a camel and this its profile,
> Daleth the door which you pass for your meal,
> Whilst He is the window you see in the wall,
> And Vav is the tent peg, important though small,
> etc.

And it is not hard to imagine the interest of the young Hebrew beginning his alphabet in this way without tears, and watching his teacher as he bent his hand in one way to represent the letter Yod,

in another way the letter Caph, whilst his hand was passed over the back of his head to feel the picture of the letter Qoph, and if he had ever suffered from toothache the letter SHin must have been only too lifelike a reminder of the fangs of an extracted tooth. Each letter was the picture of an object the child was acquainted with, and it is a curious fact that his mind was accustomed to the sign of the Cross, trained, as it were, to see in it the fulfilment of the Law, for Tau, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, as seen in seals of the fifth century B.C., took the shape of a cross, and differed in form from the Tau of later use. It was like an unconscious prophecy teaching him, before he even learned to read, that the Law was a Schoolmaster which as its final effort should lead him to Christ.

In saying that Tau, or the letter "T" in later use, differed in shape from that which was used before, it must be mentioned that there have been more editions than one of the Hebrew alphabet. In English, for instance, the letter "S" up to comparatively recent times had a different shape, something like the letter "f" with central bar omitted, from that which it was given at the end of a word. In the same way with Hebrew the shapes of the letters have considerably changed in the course of time, only instead of one or two letters being different, as in English, every letter was different. Generally speaking the differences are all grouped under two heads. What are called the Samaritan characters were in use from the earliest times up to

the time of the Babylonian Captivity, and after that they gradually died out. The square Aramaean characters, as they are called, which are now invariably used, came into vogue in the fifth or fourth century B.C. The point is worth bearing in mind, for there are certain passages in the Bibles where mistakes made by the copyists in writing out manuscripts were due to a similarity of letters, not in the Hebrew letters now used, but in those which were formerly used. In another chapter instances are given where lamedh aleph, making up the Hebrew word lô, "not," were confused with lamedh vav lô—"to him." This was because the letter Aleph was in shape like that of the letter Vav in the old Samaritan character, though the distinction between the two is unmistakable in the more modern square character.

First impressions are said to go a long way, and if the student who wishes to learn Hebrew will keep in mind these two impressions which struck him so forcibly the first time he opened a Hebrew book, they will prove the very clues that are needed for arriving at the genius of the language.

The first thing, we said, which would strike him was that Hebrew is read from right to left, the last page of an English book would be the first in a Hebrew book, and this reminds him at once that he is passing from Western to Eastern ideas, and another way of looking at things. When he places himself in the tents of the ancient patriarchs, on the plain of Arabia, or on the mountains of Palestine,

everything is to be learned anew, seen in a new light, studied from a point of view which is totally strange to our Western minds. The language, the habits of life, the modes of thought and methods for expressing it, all are changed and present a strange and foreign aspect. He may faithfully translate the Hebrew into English words, as was done by the translators in the Authorised Version, but the change is much the same as if we took an Oriental with his turbaned head and gorgeous flowing robes, and, stripping him of these associations with his own land, made him walk down Piccadilly in silk top hat and frock coat of latest style. True, the individual remains the same, but the change in his appearance is almost lamentable, and those who only read the Bible in English have yet to learn that the translation does not accurately convey the beauty and dignity of the word in its own original costume.

The other impression which struck the reader the first time he opened a Hebrew Bible was the peculiar shape of the letters. Every letter, we said, was once a picture, and in most letters that picture is still retained, at all events sufficiently so to appeal to the imagination. That is another clue for arriving at the genius of the language. The narrative which the sacred writer puts before his readers is a series of living pictures, and to get at the force of the narrative and appreciate the beauty of the language each picture must be visualised to the mind, and a touch of life must be added to make it a moving

picture, whether that touch comes from the tense or conjugation of the verb that is used, from a particle in the sentence, or the order in which the words are placed, or from the whole conception of the passage that enters the mind.

All modern books of devotion suggest that when a passage of Scripture is taken for meditation, the first thing necessary is to exercise the faculty of imagination, not only to read the passage thoughtfully, but to picture the scene described till the reader can almost feel that he is a part of the scene. He must imagine that the event is taking place before his eyes, or the words are being spoken in his presence. And it is curious as showing how old ways in course of time get revived as the best ways, that this advice from modern works of devotion is the very thing which men of old enforced on their readers, only, instead of asking their readers to do so, they did it for them. That first impression on opening a Hebrew Bible that every letter was a picture must never be allowed to fade from the mind. It is a key which opens the door to the choicest treasures of inspired writings. Moses, David, and the Prophets wrote their history, their songs and prophecies in a language of the everlasting present, showing their message to be one that is applicable to all ages of human effort and attainment. Hebrew, though dead, is a language that is yet speaking; it will go on painting these moving pictures for those who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear as long as the world shall last.

The student who follows God's Word in the language in which it was spoken finds in it a fascination which Western tongues can never offer. He discovers that it is not so much the ear that hears, but rather it is the eye that sees. The course of events is made to pass before the eye with the throb of life pulsating through every line ; the transactions are acted all over again. The past is not a fixed landscape, but a moving panorama like the ceaseless film of a cinematograph where one action is seen flowing into the next that follows : all he need do is to sit still and look on, and the grand old drama of distant days is rehearsed once more for his special benefit from start to finish.

In this respect the use of the tenses in the Hebrew historical writings is specially remarkable, and further attention will be drawn to the point later on. At present it will suffice to say that to the Hebrew beginner the constant use of the so-called future in the description of the past appears one of the most striking peculiarities of the language. But this peculiarity admits of an easy explanation. It was because the Hebrew viewed and described the transactions of the past, not as if they were over and done with, but as if they were in actual progress and in the course of taking place. What we call the future tense was with him the incomplete tense, showing that the event had not to his mind been relegated to the past. In imagination the writer quits his own point of time and throws himself into the period of which he is writing. With his reader

he sails up the stream of time, and points with that incomplete tense of his to the scenes as they are being enacted on the bank, and this peculiarity of the Hebrew tongue is a part of the romance which has to be felt at first hand, for it does not bear reproduction in the idiom of our own language. The reader of the English Bible must have remarked the constant use of the word "Behold!" which indicates that the writer is himself, and wishes to make the reader also, a spectator of the transaction he is describing. In writing even of the commonest actions, as that one went, spoke, saw, etc., the Hebrew is not usually satisfied with the simple statement that the thing was done, he must describe the process and paint how it was done. We are so familiar with the style of our English Bibles that we do not at once perceive the pictorial character of such expressions which occur on almost every page—

He arose and went.
He opened his lips and spake.
He put forth his hand and took.
He lifted up his eyes and saw.
He lifted up his voice and wept, etc.

But what we do not consciously perceive we often unconsciously feel; and doubtless it is this painting of events which affords the charm with which the Scripture narrative is invested to the young and simple. The story is told of a mother who was reading some Bible stories to her child seated on

her knees, and explaining in words of her own where she thought explanation was needed. "Tell me," said the mother, "if you can understand what I say." "Yes, mother," answered the child, "I can understand while you are reading out of the book, but I cannot sometimes understand when you begin to explain."

The general survey we are taking of the Hebrew language will not be complete without touching on the sound of the words as spoken or read aloud. There is nothing more characteristic of a nation, nothing which shows more faithfully the climate of the land in which that nation dwells, than its manner of speech. In England, for example, it is the custom to articulate the words only from between the tongue and the lips, as if we lived in an atmosphere of mist or smoke, where it was scarcely safe to open the lips very wide. Our climate demands the caution, and the caution has moulded the sounds of speech and spelling of words. With the Italians, and still more with the Greeks, it is otherwise. The language of the former abounds in full and well-expressed vowel sounds, and that of the latter with diphthongs which are uttered, not with the lips, but with the mouth well open. The accents of the East are of still deeper vent and flow forth from the very lungs, as though they were pressing on the heart for utterance, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. We have a beautiful description of this force of the Hebrew language given to us in the speech of Elihu—Job xxxii. 18–20.

"For I am full of words;
The spirit within me constraineth me.
Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent;
Like new bottles it is ready to burst.
I will speak that I may be refreshed;
I will open my lips and answer."

When these lips are opened the utterance is full of animation, and bodies forth the form of things while it is giving vent to feeling, and this gives the Hebrew language a peculiar charm of its own. It is the very breath of the soul, the quivering voice of the human heart. It does not claim the beauty of sound like the Greek, nor yet the musical tones of Italian speech, but it breathes and lives. To use its own expression it was—

"The Spirit of God that spake in it,
The Breath of the Almighty that gave it life."

There are many curiosities in Hebrew which cannot be reproduced, such as the strange fact that the same word is sometimes used, not only in different senses, but even with flatly contradictory meanings. For example, one word signifies both to bless and to curse; the same is the case with the words signifying to redeem and to pollute, to join and to separate, to afflict and to honour, to know and to be strange, to lend and to borrow, to sin and to purge, to desire and to abhor, to hurt and to heal.

Further examples of this striking feature will be found under "The Derivation of Words" in the following chapter.

The translation of Hebrew words given to us in our Bibles has often puzzled the minds of those who are strangers to the language. Take, for example, the Writing on the Wall of Belshazzar's Palace in Babylon (Daniel v. 25–28). In the first place, it seems hard to understand how all the wise men, the astrologers, the Chaldaeans, and the soothsayers were unable to translate a few simple Hebrew words, especially as the language was very much like their own, and was spoken every day in their midst. But this wonder is as nothing compared with the greater wonder when Daniel comes in and reads off long sentences from each word, as if each letter meant a whole word in itself or more. According to our version MENE takes eight words in English to bring out its meaning, TEKEL ten words, and PERES eleven. The explanation of that and a great many other texts is that any man with two eyes could read them, but only the Man of God could give the words their right meaning. PERES, for instance, meant Division, and every wise man in the place knew it did, but only Daniel could tell what that Division referred to: "Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

But still, the English reader is quite right in imagining that one Hebrew word will often require several words in his own language to give it its full significance, though the above is not a case in point. The Hebrews, like children, love to say the whole thing at once, and to express by a single word the person who did it, and to whom it was done, how

many were engaged in it, what they did, and how they did it. Person, gender, number, tense, conjugation and object can all be got into one word, though with us the same fulness of meaning would take five or more words. And-he-said, Thou-hast-thoroughly-corrected-me, In-my-cryings-unto-thee, When-I-call-impetuously-to-thee-for-help, these and such like can all be expressed in Hebrew, if occasion requires it, by one word in each case. And in Ps. xc. 5, we have one Hebrew word, Z'ram-tâm, which takes no less than eight words in the Authorised Version to express it, " Thou carriest them away as with a flood." All the ideas can be joined together by way of prefix at the beginning, or as a termination at the end of the leading idea which is contained in the verb, and stands in the centre like a king with his ministers and servants close around him. And disastrous is the result when, out of respect to the English idiom, the translator puts a servant into the group which the writer expressly refrained from putting there. Take the first word of the Hebrew Bible, for example.

According to the teaching of geology and astronomy the existence of the heavens and the earth is to be reckoned by myriads of thousands of years. According to Gen. i. 1, it is alleged, people say, that they are of yesterday; 4004 B.C. if we take Archbishop Ussher's date in the margin. To know whether this difficulty is real it is necessary to know what is actually written, and it is specially remarkable that the article found in both the

Authorised and Revised Versions—"In the beginning"—is omitted in the Hebrew, and the verse, if accurately translated, should read, "In beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The first word in the original refers to time or duration, not to order; and thus the words do not mean "At first God created the heaven and the earth," nor "In the beginning of creation He created," etc., but "Of old, in former duration, God created the heaven and the earth." How long ago is not said, and the critic need not try to make believe that it is. The Hebrew word is indefinite, for the book is not meant to be a scientific treatise, and can include millions of years as easily as thousands. The statement of the writer is therefore not contrary to the discoveries of geology, which alleges the earth to have existed for myriads of years before the creation of man. The first word of the Hebrew Bible is big enough to take in times indefinite, exceeding the powers of human comprehension. The actual words of Scripture also answer the more ancient objectors who thought it absurd that God should have created nothing in previous eternity, and had remained inactive till a few thousands of years ago. The word rightly understood says the exact contrary. It leaves "the when" of creation undefined.

In a later chapter the reader's attention will be drawn to the romance which the Jews themselves have so abundantly drawn from the language of Holy Writ, and so it will suffice at present to give one or two examples. In this first verse of Genesis which we have been talking about the letter Aleph

occurs six times, but Aleph with a stroke over it is the Jewish symbol for 1000, and so Aleph six times repeated is equivalent to 6000. Hence the Jews suppose that the existence of the world for 6000 years is signified by this fact.

Aleph Tau, making up the word Eth, is the regular sign in Hebrew of the accusative case, as –am, –um, –em in Latin are the accusative endings. Only instead of being placed at the end of the word, as in Latin, this Eth is prefixed with a hyphen called Maqqeph to the beginning of the word. The Jew, however, saw something very remarkable about this word Eth, for Aleph is the first letter of their alphabet and Tau the last. Hence they reasoned that Eth is more than sign of a case, it is the beginning and the end, so it represents the whole substance of the thing, the totiety of the word to which it is expressed. In this way the first verse of the Bible may be rendered—

" In beginning God created : the Primal Cause and End is He of the Heavens, and the Primal Cause and End is He of the earth." (Cf. Rev. i. 11 : " I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.")

Another very curious way the Jews had of interpreting Scripture was to transpose the letters of some word in a given passage so that it should in this transposition convey a further meaning. For instance, the King referred to in Ps. xxi. 1, they say is the Messiah, because the Hebrew letters in the word " shall joy," Yish-mak, make up, when transposed, the word Meshiak or Messiah.

CHAPTER II

THE DERIVATION OF WORDS

EVERY word was once a poem, and one of the chief fascinations of the Hebrew language is to take a Hebrew lexicon, and make every word express the poem it once conveyed to the mind of its inventor. According to Carlyle a word is "a seed-grain that cannot die," and like those ears of wheat discovered in the grave of a mummy, and found to be fertile when sown on good land after many a long century of incarceration in the tomb, so the Hebrew words spoken by Moses, David, or Isaiah are still productive of their ancient thought, and can be made to bring forth fruit abundantly, some twenty-fold, some sixty-fold, and some an hundred-fold when sown on the mind of a painstaking scholar. This fertility of thought and picturesqueness of idiom is not peculiar to Hebrew, it is one of the special charms of all Eastern tongues. Take a modern language, for example, so widely separated from Hebrew as the Burmese, and the same poetry of expression may be found. Amongst the Burmese, to marry is to erect a house, a gun is the demon of death, to die is merely to depart or to attain the

Eternal Calm, to faint is to die a little death, and the phrase "little death" is also applied to sleep. When a man gets grey the King of Death is said to plant his flags. A man retired from work and living on his pension is called an eater of repose, and a person of independent means is one who sits and eats. But this picturesqueness of expression, which is a feature of all Eastern tongues, is a marked feature of the Hebrew language; more than a marked feature, it is the very foundation on which the language was built. It is not merely the case that every Hebrew word was once a poem, but it must still be read as a poem and its poetry thought out before the full force of its signification can be perceived. We are told of the great poet Coleridge that he delighted to trace these derivation meanings in his perusal of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the peculiar charm of the sacred language is that we neither need the fertile imagination of a Coleridge to connect the links of thought together, nor do we need to possess such a command of literature as Archbishop Trench to make this study of words our own. As a flower grows from its seed, so we can watch the idea, growing, as it were, under our very eyes, from its simple root-meaning into some exquisite bloom, shading off from one species into another, and finally developing into such totally different ideas that only a root-lover can tell where the connexion exists. The paramount importance of the three-lettered root which forms the basis of Hebrew language, in thought as well as in structure,

is one of the first rules which the translator has to bear in mind, and the more attention he pays to this, which we may call the keystone of the language, the greater will its fascination become, and ceaseless will be the romance on which his mind may feast. "The constant usage of terms in a figurative sense, with an eye to their literal import, makes every word and phrase a picture, and renders even the prosiest utterances highly poetical."

Those who have to explain or preach the Word need specially to be on their guard lest they build their discourse on some meaning which the original does not convey, and was never meant to convey. For instance, in Gen. xlix. 4, when Jacob delivers his dying charge, he says to Reuben, according to the Authorised Version, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Times without number has the saying been quoted as illustrating the evils that result from instability of character. What Jacob meant, and the conclusion of the verse bears out, was that Reuben had shown himself a dissolute and licentious son "bubbling over like water," pakhaz cam-maim. Strange to say the Revised Version repeats the mistranslation of 1611, though it puts "bubbling over" in the margin.

Nor is it always safe to trust to a commentary without verifying from the original the conclusions which are drawn. Even some of our best-known commentators have fallen into strange mistakes from trusting to impressions received from the English translation. Thus, in Gen. xlv. 20, Pharaoh

commanded Joseph to say to his brethren, " Regard not your stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours." On this passage such an able commentator as Matthew Henry launches into comment which is quite outside the point when the original is searched. No doubt his commentary is considered out of date to-day, but the passage is worth quoting to show that clever writers must not be taken as infallible. " What they had in Canaan Pharaoh reckoned but ' stuff ' in comparison with what he had to offer them in Egypt," and then he proceeds to spiritualise the interpretation. " Those for whom Christ intends a share in His Heavenly Glory ought not to regard the stuff of this world : the best of its enjoyments are but stuff, but lumber," etc. Now, the whole of this strain of exposition is founded on a mistake. Our translators evidently did not employ the word " stuff " (repeated in the R.V.) in its modern acceptation as meaning that which is comparatively of little value. The Hebrew term, Ch' lî, conveys no such meaning, but, on the contrary, is applied to articles of decided worth, as a reference to Young's *Analytical Concordance* bears out. It was translated in 1611 as " vessel " 146 times, " instrument " 39 times, " weapon " and " jewels " each 20 times, and " furniture " 8 times, and in the passage quoted might suitably be translated as " belongings "—" Regard not your belongings, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

On the other hand, take such a notable example

as Canon Liddon's sermon on Christ's Easter greeting, or, as he styles it, The Blessing of the Resurrection—"Peace be unto you" (S. John xx. 19). With all that splendid power of language so peculiarly his own the Canon first explains the derivation of the word "Peace," in Hebrew Shalôm, and on its original meaning he builds up one of those magnificent discourses such as we are wont to associate with his name. "The exact word which our Lord uses," he explains, "undoubtedly means, in the first place, thriving, prospering, when a thing is as it should be according to its origin. In this way the word implies the absence of disturbing causes, of injury, of sickness, of unhappiness, of want. And thus the idea of rest results from the original meaning of the word. 'A man has peace,' it has been well said, 'when things are with him as they should be; and peace, then, is the absence of causes which would disturb the well-being of a society or of a man.'" The inspiration of the sermon is the derivation of the one word "Peace," and when that is seen thoughts and words flow apace to show how our Lord at the Resurrection allayed the fears that were unsettling the minds of the Apostles; by His living and visible Presence He once again made whole and sound the hearts which had been so sorely bruised the Friday previous.

Now it sounds a big thing to say, but there is hardly a word in the Hebrew language which is not a poem such as Canon Liddon traces in that word Shalôm, and there is certainly not a verse in the

whole of the Old Testament but what contains within it some such hidden gem.

> " Justice turns the scale
> For those to whom through pain
> At last comes wisdom's gain."
> Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, line 250.

What the reader has to do is to find out these hidden gems for himself; he must not be satisfied with taking them second-hand as the result of some one else's work; no further tools for the mining are required than a Hebrew lexicon which gives the root meanings of each word, and sufficient knowledge of grammar to be able to trace the word before him in the passage back to the word which he will find in the lexicon. Once he can do that a new world of thought lies open before him, a world of thought such as no man in his lifetime can exhaust, and the further he gets into it the more he will be captivated by its marvellous fascination.

The readiest way to explain this force of derivation meaning is to take a few examples to illustrate how many and how varied are the ideas which are found in the Hebrew language to shelter under the banner of a common root.

Sa-ar, for instance, is a root that means to shudder, to make one's hair to stand on end, and so to be rough, hence Se-ar means hair of the head; Sa-îr is a he-goat, because of its shaggy coat; Se'orah is barley, with bearded ears, its chief distinction from wheat being the hairs that grow from each grain.

Da-bhabh is a root which means to go slowly, or to creep, so we get Dobh, a bear which goes slowly, and Dib-bah, a slander such as creeps from house to house.

Dudh is an unused root meaning to boil up, and from that idea comes Dôdh, which is love, the warm passion, Da-vid, the beloved one, and Dudh, a pot in which things are boiled.

Ha-mah means to hum, hence Ha-môn, noise, and that noise is taken to be the sound of a shower in 1 Kings xviii. 41, or the confused noise of a multitude in 1 Sam. iv. 14, and so of the multitude itself in Isaiah xiii. 4.

Ya-ar is another unused root that presents the picture of water boiling over, so we get Ya-ar to mean honey, the overflowing of a honey-comb, and also a thicket, from the over abundance of leaves and branches that got in the traveller's way, as if the copse was boiling over with a rank luxuriance of growth.

To the English reader there may not seem to be much connexion in Job iv. 21, between " excellency " in the Authorised Version and " tent-cord " in the Revised Version. " Doth not their excellency which is in them go away ? they die, even without wisdom." The word Yether in the passage may, however, have either signification. It comes from the root Ya-thar, to be redundant, to have abundance, and so to be excellent, or if the picture presented in that word is more closely followed it means something trickling over, hanging down like a rope, and so a rope or

tent-cord, the cord which fastened the curtain to the stakes when the tent was pitched. In 2 Tim. iv. 6, S. Paul speaks of his coming death as his *analusis*, or the loosing of the tent-cord.

Sûs is a root that means to leap for joy, so we get Sûs, the usual word for horse, because it comes prancing down the road; the same word is used for a swallow, the steed of the heavens; and Sas is a moth, that flits about or prances through the air.

"Little children" is a description that appeals to every one because of the bright and happy ways we associate with the young, but the Hebrews did not wait for the idea to be associated with the word, they photographed the moving picture in their word Taph, which means tripping lightly and happily as they come.

Ba-qar is to cleave, open, plough, so we get Ba-qar, the ox used for ploughing, and Bo-qer, the dawn, or day-break.

With us the finger of the human hand is the fang-er, or catcher, with the Jew it was the dipper, called ets-ba', from tsa-bha', to dip (the finger into bowl for food).

We talk about the "family tree," whilst the Jew spoke of the man of illustrious parentage as a-tsîl (Ex. xxiv. 11), the deep-rooted one.

"Fine fat aldermen" are not peculiar to this country, for we find in 2 Kings xxiv. 15, "the rulers of the land" had the rotundity of their figures photographed for all time in the word descriptive

of their office. The root from which "rulers" (û-lim) is taken means "to be round."

There may not appear to be much in common between the ideas of binding and of being a widow, but the word for widow—al-ma-nah—is derived from the root a-lam, to bind. This word was used of binding the tongue, and so being silent. Hence the Hebrew for widow means literally the silent or solitary one.

We call May "the month of flowers," but the Jews forestalled us by giving the name of Ziv to the second month of the year, from the new moon of April to that of May. Literally it means the splendid or bright month, from Za-hah, to shine, be beautiful.

The black coat is invariably associated in our minds with the Parson, who is supposed to wear black as a sign that he is mourning for the sins of the world. But here again the Jews have anticipated us, for the word Chô-mer, sometimes used for a priest or an ascetic, meant literally one clothed in black.

That inimitable farce, "The Private Secretary," was one of the best things ever written or acted to let the clergy see for themselves the silly little mannerisms which irritate the laity, but the feelings of the Jewish priest were treated with less respect. The person who taught him his mannerisms was lêts, the scorner, from a root which means to stammer, speak barbarously or to mimic, and suggests the person "taking off" the tones or words of a religious

person, turning sacred things to ridicule. With this derivation in mind we see the beauty of the desire in Job (xxxiii. 23) for an Interpreting Angel (Mal-ach me-lîts), an Angel interceding with God, and making good his feeble stammering words before the Mercy Seat—

> "Look, Father, look on His anointed Face,
> And only look on us as found in Him;
> Look not on our misusings of Thy Grace,
> Our prayers so languid, and our faith so dim."

In Gen. xxxii. 24, we read, "And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." The word here used for wrestling comes from the root A-bhaq, which means dust, and implies that in the great night of prayer the two wrestled together so hard that they made a cloud of dust around them as the struggle went on.

Another passage, and there are many such, where the reader must fall back on the derivation of words if he wants to perceive the significance of the statement, may be found in Isaiah viii. 1, "The Lord said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-Shalal-hash-baz." The force of the command is not seen in the translation, but according to the root meaning of words the prophet is commanded to write with the pen or graving tool of the common people (e-nôsh as distinguished from îsh), *i.e.* with letters of the common sort, such as the common people might readily understand.

"There is but a step 'twixt love and hate," but in Hebrew there is only a letter to distinguish fiend from friend, for Â-habh means to love and Â-yabh to hate. Both are derived from Â-habh, to breathe, in the one case with desire, in the other with indignation.

An interesting example to show how identically the same expression on Hebrew lips could convey two meanings, of which one is the exact opposite of the other, is to be found in the expression, "lift up thine head," in Gen. xl. 13, 19. In the first case Joseph uses it to the butler to show that Pharaoh would promote him, in the latter case it is used to the chief baker as a warning that Pharaoh meant to hang him.

In the same way we find Ba-rach, a verb which has the two opposite meanings, to bless or to curse, because the root signifies to kneel, as was done when invoking a blessing or imprecating a curse. This explains the much criticised text in Job ii. 9, where Job's wife tells him, "Curse God and die" (Ba-rech elohîm va-muth). The Revisers have softened the expression without changing the meaning, "Renounce God and die." With other pointing the passage might be translated, "Humble thyself before God for thou art dying." It is said that when the poet-painter, William Blake, was drawing his illustrations to the book of Job he came to this verse but refused to take the rendering of the A.V. as likely, or as even possible. The English husband of a loyal and affectionate wife he could not follow

the course of the story in this terrible detail. All the rest he could portray step by step. But here he stayed his hand. In the same way Gen. xlvii. 7, the original which is rendered, "Jacob blessed Pharaoh," can with other pointing be translated, "Jacob bent the knee to Pharaoh."

Many words according to their derivation have recorded a custom which first gave vogue to the meaning. For instance, the Hiphil Hish-cîm, meaning to arise early in the morning, is derived from the root Shechem, a shoulder, for one of the first things their forefathers used to do when rising in the morning was to load the camel for the day's march.

In the same way Khâg, a word frequently used for festival or sacrifice (Ps. cxviii. 27), comes from the root Kha-ghagh, to go round in a circle, to dance, and so to keep festival. In later use Khâg was used for festival, whether dancing was one of its features or not.

It is said that this going round in a circle was intended to point out the revolution of the heavenly bodies and the return of the different seasons. And it is curious to find in modern primers of astronomy that when the writer seeks to explain the movements of the stars to a beginner he falls back on the idea of people waltzing round a room as the simplest illustration he can use. The couple going round and round each other illustrate the planets of our constellation going round the sun, as it were twirling round in a little circle of their own. The couple also

go round the room with other couples in a much larger circle, and this illustrates the procession of the various constellations in majestic circle swinging round some central point in the heavens.

The custom of measuring land by rope of given length, like our chain, is recorded in the word for territory, Gh'bhûl, derived from Gha-bhal, to twist or make a rope. Khebhul carries with it the same idea. Compare Psalm xix. 4, "their line is gone out through all the earth." The word used, Qav, means literally a twisted rope, and so may mean, "their boundary includes all kingdoms," or "their harp-string, their sound has gone forth to all regions."

Besides recording custom the derivation of a word is frequently of great service as explaining the opinion which was prevalent when such a word was coined. For instance, the word for "soothsayers" or "familiar spirits," Ô-bhoth, comes from a root which means a bottle, because such persons were considered to possess evil spirits or demons, as a bottle contains water. When the Scriptures were translated into Greek a word with quite a different meaning was used showing that the familiar spirits in that part of the world were considered to be of another kind. So we find Ô-bhoth translated in the Septuagint by the word *engastrimuthoi*, which means ventriloquists, because soothsayers in their country abused this art of inward speaking for magical purposes.

Considering the feeble sentiment that exists

against using the cane at school it is worth while to mention that with the Jews the same word—la-madh—is employed to express either teaching or using the rod. The difference between the two is expressed by the conjugation that is used. In the kal or simple conjugation the word means to chastise, but in the Piel or intensive conjugation it means to teach, which implies using the rod to some determined purpose. In the Talmud, that is at a period when the Jews had lost the strength and robustness of character which once marked their race, we find it laid down, " Children should be chastised only with a shoe-lace." History repeats itself.

Reference to the original will often bring out those pictorial touches of an eye-witness such as a reader will lose who only takes his information second-hand through the medium of some translation. For instance, in Joshua iv. 18, after the Jordan was crossed, we read, " the soles of the feet of the priests were lifted up unto the dry land," etc. The Hebrew for " were lifted up "—nit-t'-qû—is far more expressive and presents the picture of the priests dragging their feet out of the muddy ooze of the river-bed on to dry land. In Numbers xi. 8, we are told the people " went about " to gather the manna in the wilderness. The Hebrew for " went about "—sa-tû—turns the picture at once into one of quick and lively action, they darted about from spot to spot to gather their food as if they were flapping or whipping the ground.

Temperance is such a worthy cause it is painful

to hear it advocated with feeble and false arguments, and perhaps no arguments are more feeble than those which used to be brought forward saying that intoxicating liquor was unknown in Old Testament times. The derivation of the word for such liquor, Tîrôsh, is ample proof that intoxication was only too well known, for the word literally means "that which takes possession" (of the brain), derived from the root Ya-rash, to take possession. The Japanese have a curious proverb which says the same thing though in a different way—At the first glass the man takes a drink, at the second glass the drink takes a drink, at the third glass the drink takes the man.

With us cleanliness is next to godliness, but the Hebrew went further and said it was the sign of godliness, the word Qa-dhôsh, so often translated Holy (*e.g.* Isa. vi. 3), means pure, free from defilement. Indeed some of the most interesting theological doctrines may be drawn by looking up the derivations of terms to see the ideas which passed through the minds of men at the time those words were coined. Both the Greek Hagios and the Latin Sanctus imply a negative kind of holiness, that which is separated from the wickedness around, but the Hebrew's Qa-dhôsh was a positive goodness, that which was clean in itself.

Take another example in the word Righteousness, and trace out the radical notion of the term as written before the world, like the superscription on the Cross, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

The Hebrew term—tsa-daq—denotes that which

is perfectly straight. The Greek *Dike* is that which divides equally to all, apportions to every one his due, whilst the Latin Jus, from jubeo, means that which is commanded. The thought expressed by the Hebrew root is deeper than that which is conveyed by either the Latin or the Greek. The Romans were a military people, a nation of soldiers, and the idea of righteousness in their minds was naturally associated with that of obedience to orders. The Greeks were a people foremost in all that ministers to social enjoyment and civilisation, and their idea of righteousness was that which accorded to each the possession of his due. The thought of an antecedent and eternal distinction between right and wrong, as a straight line drawn from earth to Heaven, apart from the present results of good and evil, runs through the whole system of Old Testament morality, and that thought is graphically represented under the image of that which is perfectly straight. According to Euclid a straight line is the shortest which can be drawn from one point to another, and in the Jewish tongue Righteousness is the most direct path towards the Great White Throne. So we find that the usual word for sinning—Kha-tâ—means not only that of missing the mark, as generally taken, but also of swerving from this straight line, and thereby making so much the longer the sinner's journey towards the goal and aim of his existence. The usual term for " wicked "—ra-sha—comes from a root that expresses the notion of restlessness, tumult, or commotion. " There is no peace, saith

my God to the wicked," or as S. Augustine in his confessions worded this old Hebrew thought, " O Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself and restless is this heart of ours until it finds its rest in Thee."

Truth, in Greek *Aletheia*, is that which cannot be hid (*a, lanthano*). It is that which lies open in opposition to falsehood which lurks in darkness, and our Saviour appears to have had this derivation in mind when speaking with Nicodemus (S. John iii. 20, 21). " For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." The Hebrew derivation of the word for Truth—A-men—is different and reminds us of its indestructible firmness. The everlasting hills may tremble, the solid rocks be shattered to atoms, but Truth remains, and always will remain, immovable.

> " Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
> The wreck of nature and the crash of worlds."

Or, as our Lord Himself describes it, " Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away " (S. Matt. xxiv. 35).

In his standard work on the subject Bishop Lowth has explained that Hebrew poetry does not consist of regular metre, such as we find in Greek and Latin, still less of rhyme as we often have it in English, but in the parallelism of thought, whether by contrast, comparison, or further explanation.

The Revisers have done a splendid work for English readers by putting the songs and poetical writings of the Bible in separate lines, instead of whole verses, but a reference to the original, and keeping an eye on the derivation of words, will often bring out a parallelism of thought which has been sacrificed in the process of translation. Take such an example as we find in Prov. xi. 2:

> "When pride cometh, then cometh shame:
> But with the lowly is wisdom."

Turn to the lexicon for the root meaning of each principal word in this verse—

Pride	root meaning,		to swell.
Shame	,,	,,	to be light or empty.
Lowly	,,	,,	to chip or smooth with a hatchet.
Wisdom	,,	,,	solidity.

Now place these several primary significations in combination and you get two striking images corresponding to the two divisions of the sentence—

> "When swelling cometh, then cometh lightness:
> But with those who have been pruned (or exercised by the trial of chipping) there is solidity."

Another purpose served by being able to look up the derivations of words is to meet the objections which are sometimes lodged against Scripture, for in many cases it will be found that the difficulty has arisen from the translation, not from the actual words that came from the pen of the original writer.

Take the time-worn example of Jonah's whale for illustration. Discredit has been thrown on Scripture, especially on the New Testament quotation of the event, because some clever person discovered that the whale's gullet is not large enough to swallow a man, and some have taken the objection seriously by discussing whether the gullet of a whale is or is not large enough. The Hebrew in Jonah (i. 17, Heb. ii. 1) only says it was "a great fish," Dagh ga-dhôl, without specifying the kind, and of all the kinds which that fish may have been a whale is about the least likely of all. The word Dagh comes from a verb of which the root meaning is "to be prolific," and if whales were so prolific in that part of the world as these objectors unconsciously imply, no wonder there was one left so hungry as to strain a point over that day's meal! It is a case, such as we are recommended to do, of answering a fool according to his folly.

How much the ancient civilisations of the world knew about science is a problem which we are only able to guess at, but considering how late is our discovery of light-waves it is remarkable that the Hebrew root Na-har, which signifies to flow, also signifies to give light, and we find actual mention of this light-wave in Job iii. 4. It is only of late years that we have heard about nebular theories and the globulation of gases in the creation of worlds, and yet the usual Hebrew word for star—Chô-chabh—comes from a root which means to roll up in a ball.

It seems a far-fetched conclusion which some

have drawn from Job xxxvii. 7, that Chiromancy, or telling a person's fortune by the lines of his hand, is there referred to—" He sealeth up the hand of every man: that all men may know his work." It is, however, thought that the magnet, to take another example of ancient discovery, was known in the East long before it was known in Europe. What is translated in Job xxviii. 18, " for the price of wisdom is above rubies," may also be translated " for the attraction of wisdom is beyond the loadstone." The word Peninim, which our Authorised Version has translated " rubies," comes from panah, to turn, and was thought to mean the facets of a jewel which sparkles at every turn. It may also signify the turning or attractive power of the magnet.

Considering the importance that has been attracted of late years to atomic theories, and the various constituents in the soil for scientific cultivation, it is interesting to note that the Hebrew for earth—erets—points to similar ideas though it cannot be said to prove them. Erets is derived from a primitive root—Rats—which means breaking in pieces or crumbling, and the usefulness of the soil in supplying nourishment to vegetable life depends on this breaking up of its parts. Some think the Greek word for soil—*chthon*—comes from a Hebrew root—Cath—to break to pieces, and the Latin *terra*, from tero, to wear away, and the English word " ground," from grind, have similar derivations.

CHAPTER III

TRANSLATION

"ARISE, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee," said the Lord unto Abram when he parted from Lot (Gen. xiii. 17). It is a like promise held out before the reader when he first parts from the English translation to explore the Bible on his own account in the very language that it was first written in. As Moses in later years described the land to the children of Israel (Deut. viii. 7, 9), it is "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; . . . a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass," or copper, as this last word should be translated, for there is no such thing in Nature as a brass mine, and copper needs to be mixed with other materials to form brass, in the same way that the written word needs to be fused with the Holy Spirit to make it a living message and a treasure of great price. Many fight shy from entering the land because of rumours that have reached their ears

of the Anakim dwelling therein, but a land that can produce giants proves it to be a land worth conquering. Though there are peculiarities in the Hebrew grammar which require toil and patience to overcome, still it is these peculiarities which make the language so abundant in thought and romance, so fascinating to the mind when once their meaning and purpose are grasped. Sturnius, we are told, had reached his threescore years and ten before he even commenced Hebrew, and Origen was an old man when he set himself seriously to the task in which he afterwards won such fame. John Lightfoot, born 1602 A.D., and known to all time as "the English Hebraist," did nothing in Hebrew whilst he was at College, and we have only to link his name with his contemporaries in Hebrew scholarship, such as Selden, Castell, Pocock, Walton, Spencer, and Hyde, to show that the English speaking race have an ancient and honourable name to retain in this branch of study. More, too, than an old prestige to keep up, there are fresh laurels that need winning. The wounds which modern German criticism deals to the ancient traditions cannot be healed by reference to scholars such as the above, who knew nothing of our modern doubts and difficulties. Newly formed weapons of attack must be met with newly devised methods of defence, and we sometimes need to be reminded that in the warfare now being waged round the Bible we cannot expect a handful of Generals to do all the fighting. We have brilliant scholars in England to-day meeting

the onslaughts of German criticism, and what is wanted is the rank and file of an army sufficiently versed in Hebrew to support their Generals in resistance.

It may indeed be said that all Holy Scripture has been skilfully translated into our own tongue, the men who translated were well versed in the original language, and there is no hope that anybody in our own day can touch them. We can safely trust and rely on these translators, and go by their explanations, so that there does not seem to be an absolute necessity of learning Hebrew itself. Quite so, but as a matter of fact these Versions differ amongst themselves, and not infrequently in important passages, and a knowledge of Hebrew is essential to the person who wishes to find out which version most accurately represents the original. By following commentaries men are often following the worst explanations when they think they are following the best. As Jerome, the famous Bible scholar of the Early Church, says—

"It is indeed a great expense and infinite labour to get hold of all opinions. And even when men have done so, if they are ignorant of Hebrew they will err all the worse, not knowing which of them has spoken truly. For the same mistake which some clever Grecian made when he chanced to overlook the right idea will be repeated by every one who takes him as interpreter."

But besides actual errors there is a delightful feeling of romance to find one's self treading the holy land with one's own feet, to walk through the length of

it and the breadth of it, and to know that in one's own study the very words are being dealt with that were spoken by men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Amongst these words there are some peculiar idioms such as no other language can so vividly express and venerably transmit to the reader. As some plants when they are taken from their native soil and planted elsewhere lose their charm and vitality, so also with these words and idioms of the Hebrew language: when they are transplanted and carried away into the soil of a foreign language this power gradually fades and passes away: the plant manages to exist, but its luxuriant richness has gone.

"Inspired writings," says S. T. Coleridge, in his Preface to Lightfoot's works, "are an inestimable treasure to mankind; for so many sentences, so many truths. But then the true sense of them must be known: otherwise, so many sentences, so many authorised falsehoods."

It is not within the scope of this work to enumerate the many and painstaking attempts that have been made to reproduce the Hebrew Scriptures in the English tongue, commencing with Wickliffe's complete translation of the whole Bible in 1384, and culminating five centuries later in the Revised Version of 1885. But painstaking as all such attempts have been, not one of them can be said to give satisfaction to any one who is acquainted with the original. It is not that the scholarship of these learned

translators was lacking, nor yet that they failed in a spirit of deepest reverence towards so solemn a task, but rather that the task which they undertook is impossible. There is no finality with Hebrew translation ; the best rendering possible to-day still leaves room for a better and more faithful rendering to-morrow. No matter who the scholar may be, and however gifted he may be with the spirit of interpretation, still there is no getting over the fact that his interpretation is at best a second-hand rendering. It must be the original word to represent the original thought, or to quote a simile frequently found in the Latin writings of ancient Hebrew scholars—

" As water is always found purer at its source than in the pools to which it flows : so always are words, to a certain measure, more pure when they are taken from the very language, as from clearest spring, in which the oracles of God have been handed down to us." (Paulus Fagius, in Praefat. Chald. Paraphr.)

Some make havoc of Scripture by too free a translation of Scripture, as when such an able writer as F. D. Maurice (*Unity of the New Testament*, p. 530) translated *tekna orges* in Eph. ii. 3 as " children of impulse." Whilst others have made themselves ridiculous by too servile an adherence to the letter, like the Talmudist on Ex. viii. 2, 6, " It is said that only one frog came up into the land of Egypt, and yet it covered the land. How is this ? There was only one frog, but she croaked so

loud that the frogs came from everywhere to her croaking."

Avoiding, then, the Scylla of fertile imagination and the Charybdis of servile translation, it is necessary to learn by practice how to rightly divide (*orthotomein*) each inspired phrase and utterance, for " we have a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place " (a beautiful expression to illustrate the glory of the Divine message radiating forth from the difficulties of an unknown tongue like Hebrew) " until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts : knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost " (2 S. Peter i. 19–21).

The first and most reliable way by which a beginner may train his mind to observe the niceties of the Hebrew language is to compare the Authorised and Revised Versions together, and then to turn to the Hebrew for an explanation of the different renderings. And they who have never read any version of the Bible but the Authorised will be surprised to hear from a sober-minded veteran scholar like Bishop Bickersteth that three thousand mistakes in the A.V. and corrected by the R.V. are " of incalculable importance." A few examples will suffice to illustrate the statement.

Lev. xix. 17. " Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." The

obscurity of the last clause is removed in the R.V. by rendering, "and not bear sin because of him," which teaches the important truth that it is a sin not to give rebuke when it is called for.

Ex. xxxiv. 33, we have a curious instance where exactly opposite ideas are found in the A.V. and R.V., though the Hebrew was read in each case the same, letter for letter, and with the same pointing—

A.V. "And till Moses had done speaking with them he put a vail on his face."
R.V. "And when Moses had done speaking with them he put a vail on his face."

According to the Authorised Version Moses' face was veiled whilst the Law was being read, and S. Paul, following this way of reading the text, explains its symbolism in 2 Cor. iii. 13–16.

The Revisers, however, took the exact opposite idea, that Moses' face was unveiled whilst he read, but when that official function ceased he assumed the veil again.

Gen. xlix. 14, 15. The R.V. brings out more clearly the character of Issachar as "crouching down amongst the sheep-folds," instead of the A.V. "crouching down between two burdens," whatever that may be supposed to mean. Issachar was one who preferred the ease of rural life to a struggle for liberty and independence. Like Tityrus he would sooner enjoy his repose *sub tegmine fagi* than respond to the call to arms.

Num. iv. 20. The rigid care with which the Sanctuary was secured against desecration is laid down. A.V., "They (the Kohathites) shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die." But in R.V. the final clause is translated, "even for a moment." A single momentary glance is forbidden.

2 Sam. i. 18. David bade them teach the children of Judah, A.V., "the use of the bow." R.V., "The song of the bow (as follows)."

1 Kings xii. 31. The correction in R.V., "made priests from among all the people," instead of A.V., "from the lowest of the people," relieves Jeroboam of the superfluous folly of making the worst men priests. What he did was to disregard the priestly tribe.

2 Chron. xi. 23 is another case where the R.V. saves the reputation of a king from the slur that is cast on his character by the A.V. This latter version makes Rehoboam desire many wives, which most people would suppose to be for himself, but the R.V. clears the point, "And he sought for them (the sons just mentioned) many wives."

The signification of tenses in the Hebrew verb is so important it will be more fully discussed in a later chapter, but whilst the reader is looking at his R.V. it will be well to look up a couple of examples that he may see in his own language the striking difference which can be given to a passage by paying due regard to the right power of the Hebrew tense.

In Esther ix. 19 it is said of the Jews by the A.V.

that " they made the fourteenth day of Adar a day of feasting and gladness," as if they did so only that year. But the true sense is that this became a permanent custom. Hence the R.V., following the Hebrew more accurately, translates, " Therefore do the Jews make," etc.

In the song of triumph after passing the Red Sea (Ex. xv.) the vividness and poetical grandeur of the lyric are shown in the revision by the change of the past tense into the present in verses 5–7 of that chapter, and of the future into the past in verses 14–16, a change required by the original.

It does not fall within the province of this book to quote more examples of the three thousand corrections in the R.V. referred to by Bishop Bickersteth, but the reader who likes to follow up the subject will find notable alterations by comparing the A.V. with the R.V. in such passages as—

Gen. iv. 23 ; xiv. 13 ; xxiv. 2 ; xlix. 5, 10, 19, 26 (margin).
Ex. xvii. 16 (margin) ; xx. 13 ; xxvii. 21 ; xxxii. 25 ; xxxiv. 13.
Lev. i. 3, 16 ; iv. 7 ; xvi. 8 ; xvii. 11 ; xix. 20, 26.
Num. viii. 3 ; xiii. 33 ; xiv. 34 ; xxi. 1 ; xxiii. 22.
Deut. i. 1 ; iii. 17 ; vii. 26 ; xviii. 10 ; xx. 19 ; xxv. 5, " son," for " child," showing that it was the failure of male children only that required the application of Levirate law ; xxxi. 26 ; xxxii. 11, 17, 35 ; xxxiii. 21, 25, 28.
Joshua iii. 13 ; viii. 33 ; ix. 4 ; xxii. 11 ; xxiv. 15.
Judges v. 10, 11 ; xv. 19 ; xx. 18, 26, 31.
Ruth iv. 7.

1 Sam. i. 28 ; iii. 13 ; vi. 18 (Hebrew text corrected by the early Vss.) ; ix. 20 ; xxvii. 10.
2 Sam. ii. 23 ; vi. 19 ; xvi. 7 ; xviii. 22 ; xxiv. 23.
1 Kings x. 28 ; xii. 33 ; xv. 13 ; xviii. 45 ; xx. 27 ; xxii. 38.
2 Kings i. 3 ; viii. 11 ; ix. 8 ; xii. 4.
1 Chron. x. 3 ; xii. 14 ; xiv. 15 ; xvii. 24, 27 ; xxix. 3, 7.
2 Chron. iv. 3 ; (margin) xi. 15 ; xiv. 5 ; xxiv. 27 ; xxviii. 19 ; xxxiii. 11, 19 ; xxxiv. 6.
Ezra iv. 10 (cf. vii. 12) ; viii. 36.
Neh. iv. 6, 8, 23 ; v. 10 ; ix. 22 ; xi. 36.
Esther i. 22 ; iv. 6 ; viii. 10.
Job i. 5 (cf. verse 11 and ii. 5, 9) ; iii. 8 ; viii. 13 ; ix. 29 ; xi. 12 ; xii. 5 ; xiii. 12, 27 ; xix. 25–27 ; xxvi. 5, 10 ; xxx. 20 ; xxxi. 35 ; xl. 23.
Ps. ii. 12 ; viii. 5 ; xvi. 2, 3 ; xxxii. 8 ; xxxvii. 3, 37 (margin) ; xlv. 13 ; xlix. 14 ; lxviii. 15, 16 ; lxix. 22 ; lxxvi. 10 ; lxxvii. 2 ; lxxxiv. 5, 6 ; lxxxv. 13 ; xc. 11 ; xcv. 8 ; c. 3 ; civ. 4 ; cxix. 61 ; cxliv. 14.
Prov. x. 23 ; xvi. 1 ; xviii. 24 ; xx. 30 ; xxxi. 11.
Eccles. i. 11 ; vii. 25 ; xii. 13.
Song of Solomon iii. 9 ; vi. 12.
Isa. i. 31 ; iv. 5 ; vi. 13 ; vii. 15, 16 ; viii. 1, 19 ; ix. 1, 3, 5 ; xiii. 22 ; xiv. 29, 31 ; xvi. 1 ; xviii. 1, 2 ; xix. 10 ; xxi. 8, 9 ; xxvi. 4, 11 ; xxvii. 8 ; xxx. 7 ; xxxi. 9 ; xxxiii. 23 ; xxxiv. 7, 13 ; xxxv. 7 ; xxxvii. 36 ; xxxviii. 14 ; xlv. 23 ; l. 4 ; liii. 3, 8 ; liv. 8 ; lvii. 6 ; lix. 19 ; lxiii. 1 ; lxv. 11.
Jer. iv. 30 ; vi. 29 ; xi. 19 ; xiv. 2, 6 ; xvii. 11 ; xx. 10 ; xxxi. 15, 21 ; xlviii. 12 ; li. 17, 33.
Lam. ii. 20.
Ezek. i. 15 ; iii. 21 ; x. 13 ; xvi. 12 ; xxi. 21, 26 ; xxvii. 6.

Dan. iii. 25 ; vii. 9 ; ix. 25.
Hosea iv. 18 ; xii. 3 ; xiv. 2.
Amos ii. 13 ; iii. 12.
Micah i. 15 ; vi. 11.
Nahum ii. 3.
Hab. ii. 3, 15, 19 ; iii. 4, 14.
Hag. ii. 7.
Zech. iii. 8.
Mal. i. 10 ; iii. 17.

When the beginner has completed a course like the above of authorised corrections, his mind will be trained to make further corrections for himself in the course of translation. In doing so he cannot lay down for himself a better rule to follow than that given by the judicious Hooker whilst commenting on S. John iii. 5 (*Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V. lix. 2). "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of Scripture that where a literal construction will stand the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst."

Our country owes too much to that marvellous translation given in 1611 for any to think he can lightly correct or revise its renderings, and lest any may feel inclined to indulge in the captious criticism by which shallow minds think to air their knowledge it is well to quote the words of Archbishop Trench to show the spirit in which the task should be approached—

"It seems at once an unthankfulness and almost an impiety to dwell on errors in that (the A.V.) to which we owe so much ; to which the whole religious life of

our land owes so much ; which has been the nurse and fosterer of our national piety for hundreds of years ; which, associated with so much that is sad and joyful, sweet and solemn in the heart of every one, appeals as much to our affections as to our reason." And later on he adds, "In setting forth God's Word in another language from that in which it was first uttered, we may justly desire an approximation to perfection such as language will allow ; and this not merely in greatest things but in smallest."

There are certain passages which even to this day baffle our best scholars, such as Ps. cxli. 5–7, and Zech. vi. 11–13, but there are few places so hopeless as these, and even without a commentary, a good lexicon will generally suffice to explain each difficulty as it arises. The number of places, especially in the poetical books, where the original will shed a volume of light such as has been lost in the process of translation is practically infinite. The most that can be done in a book of this size is to draw the reader's attention to a few examples in the hope it may whet his appetite to search for more.

We cannot begin better than by taking a couple of examples where the translation cannot be understood without reference to the Hebrew for the clue that has been lost or passed over. In Gen. xxxi. 24, for example, God says to Laban the Syrian in a dream, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad," which reads as if he was to say nothing at all. The beginner, however, can easily

translate the Hebrew, which says that he is not to speak "from good to evil," and means that he is not, in Oriental fashion, to begin with friendly greetings and from these pass on to abuse or threats.

Take another example from Num. xxii. 22, where it says that God's anger was kindled against Balaam because he went with Balak's messengers, whereas it is said only two verses previous, "And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." The Hebrew text contains an explanation that has not been noticed in either the A.V. or R.V., and that is the emphatic pronoun hû at the end of the clause, so that it should be accurately translated, "And God's anger was kindled because he was going of his own accord, or by his own determination." God respects the free will of man, even though it be to his own hurt and destruction. Balaam's mind was made up, and that by himself, before the vision at night of verse 20, and God allowed his decision to run its course, even to the extent of commanding him to do as he was resolved, but none the less he was grieved with Balaam for making such a misuse of free will, and the grief broke out into anger when the journey to Balak commenced.

Job iii. 5. In Job's imprecation on the day of his birth the A.V. mistranslates, and the R.V. misses the point in its rendering.

A.V. " Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it."
R.V. " Let darkness and the shadow of death claim it for their own."

More than claim, the Hebrew verb Gha-al (which gives us Goel, the word for Redeemer) means, " assert the right of possession belonging to it." Out of darkness came that day, unto darkness let it return.

Gen. vi. 3. " And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man," a reading which might stand if the Hebrew was Yâ-din, but it is Yâ-don, meaning, " My spirit shall not always be humbled in men."

Gen. xvi. 13. " And (Hagar) called the Name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me ; for she said, Have I also looked here after Him that seeth me ? " Both A.V. and R.V. leave untranslated a word that lends a wonderfully vivid touch to the picture in that last clause—" for she said, Have I also here, stamping on the ground, looked after Him that seeth me ? " Is it here in the desert that I have seen (for the first time in my life) the God that seeth me ? more than I ever knew whilst living with Abraham who professed to be so religious, stamping on the ground to indicate the spot, betraying her passion at being turned out from her home, and showing the impetuous character of the mother from whom Ishmael inherited the wildness of his nature. For the infinitive construct (ha-lom) used adverbially like the Latin gerund in -do, cf.

Isa. lx. 14; and for the meaning of the verb to stamp on the ground, cf. Judges v. 22, R.V.

> " Then did the horsehoofs stamp (same verb)
> By means of the prancings."

Gen. xxv. 32. " Esau said, Behold I am at the point to die," and preachers have often drawn the pathetic picture of the exhausted huntsman at his last gasp, and salving his conscience for bartering his birthright by the plea of absolute urgency, but the words used scarcely bear the force of one who was *in extremis:* they should be rendered, " Behold, I am liable to die," " I am daily in danger of death," and some experience in the field that day may have shown him the risks he ran, and with those risks it was not much use to build on future expectations.

1 Sam. xv. 32. " Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past." It seems a pity to interfere with this text, for it is a striking passage to teach the speaker or preacher that when he approaches his audience delicately, not quite sure whether he ought to say what he is saying or not, he is almost certain to be hewn in pieces by his critics as Agag was by Samuel. However the R.V. has spoiled such a reference by placing " cheerfully " in the margin instead of " delicately." That only makes the difficulty worse. We can understand a captain in peril of his life treading the court delicately or reluctantly as he came up to be judged, but

it is hard to understand how he would do so cheerfully, nor did his remark befit the occasion, "surely the bitterness of death is passed." Just the opposite, he saw what little chance he had of getting off, and what he did say was, "Surely the bitterness of death hath drawn near" (Sar). For the same meaning of the verb Sûr, to draw near, instead of pass away, cf. Ex. iii. 3, where Moses says, "Let me draw near (â-surah) now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." (A.V. "I will now turn aside.")

Ex. xx. 7. A more literal translation of the Third Commandment would rescue it from the ambiguity which our translation makes it bear. Instead of "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain," translate, "Thou shalt not lift up the Name of Jehovah to wickedness," ratifying an evil thought or plan by sacred appeal (like saying Corban, S. Matt. xv. 5), doing what is wrong under the cloak of religion.

Ps. cvi. 15. "And He gave them their request:
But sent leanness into their soul."
More correctly, "And He gave them their request:
And He thinned their numbers by death"

(lit. He sent thinness into their life, see Ps. lxxviii. 29–31).

Judges xv. 19. "But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout." The word translated "jaw" is the name of a place, Lehi.

2 Kings xxiii. 6. "He brought out the grove from the house of the Lord." A grove cannot be carried out from a house, and should be translated "the image of Astarte."

Gen. xxxvi. 24 is another case of a proper name being translated as if it was a common noun, "This was that Anah that found the mules (as if he bred or invented them) in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." The R.V. follows the Latin version in rendering, "This is Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." The word Emim, translated "mules" in the one version, "hot springs" in the other, is the proper name of a people whom Anah encountered, and the passage should be rendered, "This was that Anah who encountered the Emim in the wilderness."

Besides passages like the above, where the translation clearly wants amending, there are other passages where the force of the Hebrew has to be felt rather than expressed. When the Hebrew writer, for instance, wanted to emphasise some special word in a sentence there were no italics for him to use, and the idea never occurred to him of underlining that word. What he did was to show that emphasis by the place he made that word take in his sentence, or else by an accent which drew the notice of the hearer to the idea he was insisting upon. As a rule the last syllable of the word received that emphasis, and so we find that the letter "n" (called paragogic nun) is sometimes attached to the end of a verb to

let this emphasis be seen. It is one of those little touches in the Hebrew language which have to be seen with the eye, but cannot very well be expressed in words. When Jethro expostulates with his son-in-law Moses for overdoing it (Ex. xviii. 20) he recommends Moses to teach the people the ordinances and laws, and the work that they must do—ya-'a-sûn. The final letter throws the obligation of doing from Moses on to the people, as much as to say, they are the ones who ought to be doing it, and you must insist on their doing it. Again in Deut. v. 33 (Heb. 30) we read, "Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live," tikh-yûn, the "n" at the end emphasises the word "live," as much as to say, "that ye may live something nobler than mere animal life."

It seems hardly necessary to say that there are a great many passages in the Old Testament where the correct meaning can only be understood by knowing the customs of the land. Instances like these cannot be included in the romance of the language, but a few examples may be quoted to show the kind of passages which are purposely omitted. In 2 Sam. xvii. 23 we read, Ahithophel "put his household in order" (same expression is used about Hezekiah in 2 Kings xx. 1), and means that he made his Will. Ps. xxxv. 16. "With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth." R.V. "Like the profane mockers in feasts," etc. These profane mockers

are, if literally translated, "mockers for a cake," the poor buffoons who attended the feasts of the wealthy, hoping for their wit to be thrown a cake from the table, and the Psalmist means that he was made the laughing stock of even such poor wit as theirs.

Isa. xvi. 14. "The Lord hath spoken, Within three years as the hire of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned," *i.e.* it shall come to pass at that very time, without any delay, as the hireling throws down his tools at the exact moment for stopping work.

2 Kings ii. 9. R.V., margin, Elisha asked, not for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, but, as the idiom implied, for a first-born's portion, that he might be recognised as Elijah's lawful successor.

Ps. lx. "The lily of witness," as the heading Shushan-Eduth implies, is a magnificent prophecy of Christ's conquests over the Jewish world, when its geography and customs are explained, but one cannot help wondering what the little choir-boy thinks as he sings out before the congregation, "Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe." Translating the imagery into plain English the verse should read—"I will reduce the Moabite to the vilest servitude, I will also triumph over the Edomites, and make them slaves: and the Philistines shall add to my triumph." And choir-boys are not the only ones who need to have the customs and figurative language of Scripture explained. The story is often told of the curate who was

anxious to put his choir into cassocks and surplices, but he could not overcome the vicar's objection to what was considered a needless innovation. After repeated appeal the vicar at last agreed if any text from Scripture could be found to justify the proposal. The curate won his point by quoting Ps. ~~clxvii.~~ 10, "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man." The parallelism of the verse, however, is between the cavalry and infantry of an army to show that the Lord is independent of human aid—

> "He delighteth not in cavalry:
> He takes not pleasure in infantry."

Or take a passage far more obscure in its meaning than the last, Ezek. xxi. 21, "For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver." Both translation and punctuation show that the learned Divines of 1611 were puzzled to make sense of the passage, for they placed a colon in the middle of words that should be taken together, and the place should be rendered, "to use divination he mingled his arrows." But correct translation is not sufficient without further explanation. Divination by arrows was an ancient method of foretelling events. Jerome says the way they used to do it was, "they wrote on several arrows the names of the cities against which they intended to make war, and then putting them all into a quiver

promiscuously they caused them to be drawn out in the manner of lots, and that city whose name was on the first arrow drawn out was the first they assaulted."

As we remarked at the beginning, the translator must never forget that he reads Hebrew from right to left, not from left to right like English : in other words, he must always remember that he is dealing with the language of a people who looked at things from a different point of view to his, and a bald translation of Hebrew is often no better, as there stated, than asking an Oriental to take off his turban and flowing robes and walk down Piccadilly in top hat and frock coat. For instance, Job xxx. 29 is translated in A.V., " I am a brother to dragons " ; R.V., " I am a brother to jackals." The translation is accurate, but the change from Hebrew to English is lamentable, for the Englishman takes the words literally and wonders what they mean. Look at it from the Eastern point of view, and the words are seen to be a poetical way of expressing, " I am forced to howl like a jackal."

2 Sam. viii. 1. A.V., " And David took Methegammah out of the hands of the Philistines." Instead of taking this to be the name of a town, the R.V. translates the words, " And David took the bridle of the mother city out of the hand of the Philistines." Again the Oriental is made to put off his own picturesque garb and to stand forth in English tailor-made suit. Literal translation only destroys the meaning unless we pause over that meaning to

catch the Hebrew idiom, "And David subjected the metropolis of the Philistines to himself."

Mal. ii. 3. A.V., "Behold I will corrupt your seed."
R.V., "Behold I will rebuke the seed for your sake,"

which means "I will prohibit the seed from entering your barns, *i.e.* I will refuse you your harvest."

The other point to which attention was drawn in the introduction is the pictorial nature of the Hebrew language, and where so many examples occur it is hard to say which to select, or where to stop when one begins. However, let us begin our illustrations from the first book of the Bible by taking the well-known passage in Gen. iii. 15, which speaks of the enmity between the Serpent and the Seed of the woman, "it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." As the translation stands, it points the reader's thought to those days of decisive conflict when Christ in human flesh met the Tempter, and though bruised at last prevailed. The Hebrew verb Shûph is more emphatic and figurative, pointing to the ceaseless watchfulness of the two contrary Powers of Light and Darkness, always watching to attack each other. "It shall lie in wait for thy head with gaping mouth, and thou with gaping mouth shalt watch for his heel."

Gen. xlii. 30. When Joseph's brethren came back to their father from Egypt they did not merely speak of their brother as "the man, *who is* the lord of the land," but they emphasised their description

with a *pluralis excellentiae,* " the man, the great lord of the land."

The reader can easily look up further examples of this *pluralis excellentiae* where the plural is used in the Hebrew word to emphasise the idea of the singular. In 1 Sam. ii. 3, the word for " knowledge " is plural in Hebrew, so is that for " vengeance " in Judges xi. 36 and 2 Sam. iv. 8. Similarly " understanding " in Isa. xxvii. 11 and xl. 14; " joy " in Ps. xvi. 11.

Ex. vi. 9. The Children of Israel " hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit," literally for shortness of breath. They were so out of breath by the hard work in which they were engaged they were not able to speak.

Deut. i. 5. " On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying." The verb for " to declare " means literally to dig out, and in the Piel conjugation (which is here used) to keep on digging, and laying out on the ground for inspection, as a miner might do at the end of his day's work. To Moses had been the toil of digging, thinking, and communing with the Deity; theirs was to be the inspection when this toil was ended.

Deut. vi. 7. " And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children," or, as it might be literally translated, " thou shalt rub them in," for none knew better than Moses how slow the people were to take in those words, and the constant repetition needed before the meaning would be grasped.

2 Sam. vi. 6. A graphic touch is added by the historian to the scene at Nachon's threshing-floor, where " Uzzah put forth his hand to the Ark of God and took hold of it ; for the oxen shook it." The verb for " shook " (R.V. stumbled) is Shâ-mat, which means to strike, to urge a beast vehemently, and so to become restive, and implies that some one had just given the oxen a vicious prick with the goad, so much so that they became restive, and Uzzah rushed forward to offer his help.

Job xxxiii. 6. " I also am formed out of the clay," but the verb qâ-rats is even more figurative, " I too was nipped off from the clay," an image taken from the potter who pinches off a piece from the lump of clay to make a vessel, and reference may be intended to the idea of being taken as one tiny morsel from " the bundle of life."

Ps. ii. 2. " And the rulers take counsel together." The Hebrew word for " take counsel " pictures the men sitting together in conclave to draw up their plans.

Ps. vii. 13. " He hath bent his bow and made it ready," but the original shows what a mighty bow it is and how swift the destruction it would work. Too strong to bend with the hands, it is one which dhâ-rach, He hath trod with His foot.

Jer. vi. 4. " Let us go up (for the attack) at noon," literally, at double noon, when light is brightest and heat is greatest, *i.e.* at such a time when the attack would be least expected.

Jer. li. 11. A.V., " Gather the shields." R.V.,

" Hold firm the shields," literally, fill the shields, *i.e.* cover your bodies with them.

Zeph. ii. 1. R.V., " Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation that hath no shame." The first verb in Hithpoel conjugation signifies " collect your thoughts." It is used for gathering straw in Ex. v. 7, 12, and for gathering sticks in Num. xv. 32, and possibly a slight irony is implied by the prophet, as much as to say, " your thoughts are not worth much, but such as they are gather them together, and see if there is no sense of shame, no consciousness of sin, left among you."

The romance of the Hebrew language in the process of translation would not be considered sufficiently discussed without some brief reference to the doctrinal perversions which may be found in our translation of the Old Testament. Considering how high party feeling and religious controversy ran at the time when the A.V. was published, it is almost miraculous that the translators were able to keep as free as they did from prejudice and theological bias. If a few examples are quoted where they slipped it must not be taken as suggesting that such cases were frequent, but rather for the sake of pointing out how easy it would have been for them to err in this direction.

Ex. ix. 16. " And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up (margin—made thee to stand), for to show in thee My power." This reads as if God had created Pharaoh solely for the purpose of his being made an example of God's severity and

vengeance. Whereas the real meaning is that God had, as the margin says, made Pharaoh stand, *i.e.* He had preserved him safe through plagues that had destroyed others; but now in verse 14 God threatens that He will "bring all His plagues on Pharaoh's heart," that he may be the more remarkable example of Divine Power and that Pharaoh may know that there is none like God in all the earth.

1 Sam. ii. 25. We are told about the sons of Eli "notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would destroy them." The Hebrew Chî, translated here "because," often means "wherefore," "though." They refused to listen even though the awful punishment was threatening.

Prov. xvi. 4. "God made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil," as if it was possible for God to have created any men for the purpose of damning them. The Hebrew, when grammatically rendered, means, "God rules all things so that they agree, or answer one to another, and even the wicked agree to (or are fitted for) the day of evil."

Isa. lxiii. 17. "O Lord, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways, and hardened our hearts from Thy fear?" This should be translated, "O Lord, why hast Thou suffered us to err from Thy ways, and permitted us to harden our hearts that we fear thee not?" The prophet does not bring a complaint against the Almighty, but asks a question

such as has puzzled so many minds concerning the mystery of man's free will.

Jer. xvii. 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" The correct translation would be, "The heart is deceitful above everything, and corrupt," or morally diseased. The addition made to the original in the A.V. savours of the view afterwards expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith—"From original corruption we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil."

It has no doubt struck some in reading the English Bible that there are passages which are not only hard to understand, but also there is something about the wording of the translation which suggests that the difficulty is more likely to be due to the translator than to the writer. For instance, 2 Kings viii. 9, 10, we read the message which Hazael brought from the king of Syria to the prophet Elisha—"Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die." The Hebrew for "unto him," lô, sounds exactly like the Hebrew for "not," lô, though the spelling is different. It seems, therefore, much more probable that what Elisha said was not as above, but, "Go, say, Thou shalt not recover: for the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die."

In 1 Kings xix. 19 we read that Elijah called Elisha to follow him by casting his mantle upon him. When Elisha obeys the summons and asks permission to go and say good-bye to his parents, Elijah absolutely stultifies himself by replying, according to A.V., "Go back again: for what have I done to thee?" The passage reads as if Elisha was first called to make a self-denial changing the whole tenour of his life, and then as soon as he responds to the call Elijah replies, "Don't take any notice of what I said or did; keep on ploughing." Curious to say, the Revisers have repeated word for word what is obviously a mistranslation in the A.V., and that without offering any alternative in the margin. The Hebrew presents no difficulties, and should be rendered, "Go (but mind thou) comest back again: for see how great a thing I have done to thee" (by casting my mantle upon thee).

Take Gen. xx. 16. "And unto Sarah (Abimelech) said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved." The rebuke, however, which Abimelech administered to Sarah is much more pointed and covers the deception she had just practised upon him if we render, "Behold, I have given thy brother (Abraham) a thousand pieces of silver: behold, it is (*i.e.* the silver is, not he is) to thee a covering of the eyes (thou canst buy a veil out of that sum) with regard to all those who

are with thee, and to all (or, in all things) speak thou the truth." Taking the last verb as second person perfect (used as imperative) from the verb nâ-chakh, to make straight, speak correctly.

1 Kings xxii. 15. We have here an interesting illustration of ancient oracles which were famed for their double meaning, and for giving an answer which was bound to be verified whatever happened. Micaiah, quoting in irony the words of the false prophets, says to Ahab, king of Israel, "Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king." There is no word for "it" in the original, and so the A.V. places the word in italics. The R.V. does not! As the statement stands in the original, the false prophets said, "The Lord will deliver into the king's hand," and that might either mean, The Lord will deliver Ramoth-Gilead into the king's (*i.e.* Ahab's) hand, or, The Lord will deliver Israel into the king's hand, *i.e.* into the hand of the king of Syria. Micaiah saw the ruse, and possibly Jehoshaphat did also by asking to have another prophet sent for, but Ahab was taken in.

So we read in classical times of the Delphic Oracle returning answer to Croesus, "Croesus, Halym penetrans, magnam subvertet opum vim." "When Croesus enters Halys 'twill be his lot to find a grand overthrow of power." Croesus thought he would be the one to overthrow, but found instead that he was overthrown himself. "Just what I told you," said the Oracle.

On another occasion the Oracle told Pyrrhus, king of Epirus—

> "Aio te, Æacida Romanos vincere posse
> Ibis redibis nunquam in bello peribis."

Pyrrhus thought it meant that he should overcome the Romans, but he found to his cost it could also mean, "The Romans can overcome thee."

The latter line can be translated in two ways—

"Thou shalt go, thou shalt return, thou shalt never perish in war."

"Thou shalt go, thou shalt never return, thou shalt perish in war."

Eccles. iii. 1. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the sun." As S. Jerome said in the quotation given at the beginning of this chapter, one great disadvantage in not being able to translate the original for one's self is that the reader is at the mercy of the person who translates; he may be right, or he may be wrong. And this text is a case in point. The expression that there is "a time for every purpose under the sun" is always taken to imply that there is a favourable opportunity which ought to be seized before it has passed. This idea comes from the Greek version of the above, which translated "time" by *kairos*, and this Greek word is illustrated by Shakespeare's well-known lines—

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows, and in miseries."

The Greek version has perpetuated this construction of the passage from generation to generation. However, the Hebrew word for "time" does not mean "favourable opportunity," but rather a set and limited time which baffles every human effort; it is not the moment when man may master his fate, but when his fate masters him.

Some translations there are in our A.V. which either contradict themselves point blank, or else raise a suspicion as to their propriety by a moment's consideration. For instance, Ps. xxxii. 3, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long." How can a man keep silence when he roars all the day long? It should be, "While I am lost in thought my bones waste away through my roaring (or excessive grief) all the day long."

Joshua xxiv. 19. Another evident contradiction is to be seen in the translation of this passage. Joshua had been exhorting people to serve the Lord, and they pledge themselves to do so. Then, according to A.V., Joshua goes on to say, "Ye cannot serve the Lord," though it was the very thing he had just asked them to do! Evidently this is a mistranslation, and it should be rendered, "Cease not to serve the Lord, for a God of those devoted to Himself is He: a jealous God is He."

Gen. xi. 6. "And now nothing shall be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." This is not in accordance with fact, for God soon stopped their designs. Translate interrogatively—"shall they

not be restrained in all that they have imagined to do ? "

1 Sam. xvii. 22. " And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage." A shepherd boy, as David was, was not likely to keep a carriage of any description. Translate, " And David left his charge with the store-keeper." In Acts xxi. 15 we read, " And after those days we took up our carriages " (should be baggage) " and went up to Jerusalem." So far from belonging to the carriage folk the idea implied is the very opposite : S. Paul belonged to the order of what we call nowadays " the portmanteau-carrying bishops."

Deut. xxix. 4. " Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." Unbelievers have fixed on this text to make out that the fault of unbelief rests with their Maker rather than themselves, but the preceding verses show that God had been appealing to them and reminding them of the great wonders He had wrought in delivering them from their enemies. Then it is added, not as rendered above, but, " Has not God given you hearts to believe (these wonders), and eyes to see them, and ears to hear them ? " for they were all of them living witnesses of these things.

Some of the A.V. renderings bring Scripture into needless disrepute, such as those in Ex. iii. 22 and xii. 36, where the Israelites are said " to borrow " or " be lent " jewels of the Egyptians, which would have been dishonest, as there could have been no

intention of returning them. The word used for "borrow" in the first instance means, as the translators have recognised elsewhere, "ask," with no implied promise of restoration. Thus, with the same word in the original, Sisera "asked water and she gave him milk," Judges v. 25; Solomon "asked of the Lord wisdom," 1 Kings iii. 11; and "Thou hast asked a hard thing," says Elijah to Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 10. Six hundred thousand Israelites had slaved for Egypt for a considerable period of years, and instead of borrowing from the Egyptians as if they were asking a favour, they only put forward a claim for services rendered.

CHAPTER IV

SMALL THINGS

"In minimis Deus maximus," runs the old Latin proverb; it is in the small things of life that the Majesty of God is felt; and this maxim of the Divine Providence is well borne out in the sacred tongue by which the oracles of God have been handed down to us. Indeed, there is no language which so well repays the reader for attention to details as Hebrew, and the more his mind opens to perceive how some small point can change the whole construction and colouring of a sentence the greater becomes his fascination with the language.

The day of small things is not for him the elementary stage when he is mastering the grammar, or when he first begins to spell out a few verses with the help of his lexicon, but rather that happy day when he has grown sufficiently versed with the outlines of the language to put in finishing touches, and is able to make the words of each ancient writer speak to his mind with a vividness and fulness of meaning such as no translator can express in the clumsy utterance of Western speech.

When any one visits the studio of some great

sculptor he finds that a pupil is allowed to shape the general outline of statue from the block of marble, but it is the master hand which alone can give the beauty of life and expression when the block begins to take its proper shape, and in the same way any beginner can translate Hebrew, but only the scholar can turn the translation into a living picture. The pianist must first learn to strike the right notes, and, when he has learned to do this, then follows the day of small things, the day of delight when he gives those notes the delicate touch which brings out the soul of music and thrills his soul with responsive passion.

In the same way the reader of the Hebrew Bible must learn to give words their right meaning and grammatical force, and then comes the glorious time when he gets into the genius of the language, and learns to see with the eye what the very best translators have never been able to convey to him by the tongue. The passage before him, he finds, has lost none of its freshness, even though it be some three or four thousand years old—the hidden gem has lost nothing of its brilliancy though buried in the obscurity of a foreign language for countless generations.

At one time it is the derivation of a word which appeals to the reader's imagination, at another time the tense or conjugation of the verb that is used, or it may be the force of a preposition, the power of an accent, the order of the words, or the play upon words called paronomasia (something like our

" puns "), the variation perhaps of only one letter in different readings, the insertion of a particle or suffix—these, and such like, as seen by the eye, are but small things, and yet they represent the finishing touches which absorb the mind with a fascination that never tires ; they are the rewards of patient toil given to welcome the pilgrims of night who have plodded through the dark stages of elementary knowledge. The letter may kill, for the drudgery of mastering grammar and syntax has made many give up the study of Hebrew, but once these are acquired the spirit giveth life, and the life that follows is ample reward for the toil spent in attainment—

" The labour we delight in, physics pain."

Vowel Pointing

The first and most obvious method of illustrating the importance of small things in Hebrew is to refer the reader to the frontispiece of this book, where a page is given from the Hebrew Bible. When he turns to it he will perceive that every letter has a mark of some kind, either below it or above it, or in the middle of it. Some of these marks are accents, but the greater number are vowel points, and the vocalisation of the language almost entirely depends on these small points and dashes. The three primary sounds of human speech, A, I, U, were represented by the Jews when full and emphasised pronunciation was to be given to these words by the letters

Aleph, Yod, Vav, and occasionally He, and the only vowel sounds actually written in ancient manuscripts were these long and emphatic ones; any other kind of vowel sound was simply left out. For instance, in the word for horse, sûs, the vowel was to be given full pronunciation, and so a vav was inserted between the two s's to remind the reader that such was the case; but in the word for bread, Lekhem, both vowels are short, and consequently were left out. With the exception of these four letters, A, H, I, U, called by old grammarians *matres lectionis*, or helps to reading, there was not a single vowel in the Old Testament from beginning to end. The vowels that were needed in giving the consonants their right pronunciation were all inserted by the reader from memory. Before his eyes the Bible appeared the same as the first verse of Genesis would appear to us if we took away all the vowels and only left the consonants remaining—

N TH BGNNNG GD CRTD TH HVN ND TH RTH.

No doubt this will appear simple to us to read because the words are so familiar, but let the reader try and make out for himself a verse that is not so familiar, and treated in the same way, say Deut. xxviii. 34—

S THT TH SHLT B MD FR TH SGHT F THN YS WHCH TH SHLT S.

As if that by itself was not difficult enough to decipher, all these letters ought to be strung

together straight from one end of the line to the other if we want to gain an accurate impression of what an old Hebrew manuscript looked like in the time, say, of our Lord. In His day and for some time later there was no division between the words, and the text taken from Deuteronomy would look like this—

STHTTHSHLTBMDFRTHSGHTFTHNYSWHCHTH
SHLTS.

Needless to say this *Scriptio continua*, as it is called, left room for much ambiguity, and when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek about 180 B.C. the translators in a few instances divided the words in wrong places, as may be seen by consulting commentaries on such passages as Gen. vii. 11 ; xx. 16 ; xl. 17 ; Ps. ix. 6. Or take an example from our own translation. Amos vi. 12. " Shall horses run upon the rock ? Will one plough *there* with oxen ? " The word " there " is in italics to show that it was inserted to save the translation from an obvious mistranslation, " will one plough with oxen ? " for ploughing in those days was always done with oxen. The Hebrew for " with oxen " should probably have been read as two words instead of one, the division between the two was inadvertently omitted, and instead of " with oxen " the rendering should have been as two words, " with oxen the sea." Taken in this way, the verse would be, " Shall horses run upon the rock ? Do men plough the sea with oxen ? "

Or, again, 1 Sam. iii. 13, treating the Hebrew words in the same way the meaning would not be as A.V., "his sons made themselves vile," but "his sons did revile God."

So long as Hebrew remained a spoken language it was a comparatively simple matter to insert these vowels from memory, as can be done in the first example we have taken from Gen. i. 1. But when it ceased to be spoken it must have required a marvellous memory to save the reader from making mistakes, as most of us would make in reading the second example, in Deut. xxviii. 34. By degrees a system of vowel points to assist the reader, and called Hebrew pointing, was invented, and this system was completed by the seventh century of the Christian era. By that time S. Patrick's Mission to Ireland had begun to bear abundant fruit, S. Columba's teaching was making itself known throughout Scotland, and S. Augustine had converted England into a Christian nation. And so it came to pass by the overruling of Divine Providence that the same period which saw the three kingdoms awakened to receive the Gospel of the New Testament also saw Jewish Rabbis at work inventing a system which should open the door to the Old Testament.

> "There is a destiny which shapes our ends
> Rough-hew them how we will."

And the curious coincidence of these great missionaries doing their work in the British Isles, at

the same time that Jewish Rabbis in another part of the world were busy at work pointing the text of the Old Testament, is somewhat akin to the curious coincidence of Acts x. 9, where we read that S. Peter had his vision about admitting Gentiles to the Christian Church at the very time that the messengers of the Gentile Cornelius were on the road to find the Apostle.

According to this system of Hebrew pointing, there are five long vowels, five short, and three very short, so short that they scarcely represent more than a catch in the breath, like the letter " a " in our word geography, or the second " e " in Deuteronomy. The A sound was represented by a small T or a little dash placed under the letter; E by two or else three dots under the letter, and I by one dot under the letter, O by a dot above the letter, U by a combination of dots, and the very short vowels by other combinations of dots under the letter. The other small marks or signs which the reader sees in the frontispiece, whether above or below the letters, are accents, and these have a history of their own to tell quite distinct from the vowel points.

How easy it was for the reader to slip into serious grammatical mistakes before this system of vowel pointing was drawn up may be proved by taking the three radical letters of any regular Hebrew verb, for example, for without any points to assist the memory those three letters would stand for no less than eleven different parts of the verb. The reader

would have to rely on memory to tell him whether those three letters stood for Kal, Piel, or Pual conjugations; having settled the conjugation, his memory again would be the only guide to tell him whether the mood was Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, or Participle. Besides being a verb or a participle, those three letters might stand for a noun, or even for two different nouns, with meanings distinct the one from the other. For instance, the three consonants, D B R, might be Dabhar, he spoke, or the participle Dobher, speaking, or they might be the noun Dabhar, a word, or another noun with quite a different signification, Debher, pestilence.

Treat our own language in the same way, and the reader will see for himself the ambiguity which would follow. Take any three consonants haphazard, say R S T, and leave the reader to put in his own vowels to make up a word which should suit the context, and from those three letters he could get words of such different meaning as RoaST, RooST, RuST, ReSeaT, etc. B R D in the same way might stand for BaRD, BiRD, BRiDe, BeaRD, BoaRD, BoReD, BReaD, BReeD, BRoaD, BRooD, BRaiD.

It is not hard, then, to see the terrible amount of corruptions which might have crept into the sacred text if the Jews had wished to tamper with the Oracles committed to their keeping, or if they had failed to remember the correct pronunciation of the words and letters handed down to them.

Indeed, it is no small part of the romance of the Hebrew language to find how marvellously pure the text of the Bible has been preserved in spite of the thousands of mistakes which might so easily have been made, to say nothing of the wilful corruptions that might have been inserted at the time when controversy 'twixt Jew and Gentile raged so fierce. Take one example, or rather one glaring exception to this rule, to see how easily words might have been manipulated to agree with the controversial arguments of theologians. It occurs in Ps. xxii. 16, and has been the source of almost as much criticism in the Old Testament as 1 Tim. iii. 16 has been in the New. In the latter case the controversy raged over the single letter "O" in a certain manuscript of the Greek New Testament. Had it, or had it not, a bar in the centre of the letter? If it had, and the translators in 1611 believed it had, the word was the shortened form of the Greek word for God, Theos, and the passage should read, "God was manifest in the flesh," and this definitely settled the long-vexed question concerning the Divinity of Christ. If it had not, and the Revisers in 1881 believed the evidence was against that bar in the letter, then the word was the relative pronoun OS, and the passage should be translated, "He Who was manifested in the flesh." Even longer and more fiercely has controversy raged over that passage in Ps. xxii. 16. It all turned upon the letter of one word in the Hebrew text, between an I and a U, whether the word should be read as

Ca-a-ru, which means "they pierced," or Ca-a-ri, which would mean something totally different, "as a lion." If U was the original letter, then the verse was a remarkable prophecy of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, all the more remarkable because crucifixion was not a known method for putting any to death among the Jews at the time the Psalm was written. And the Jews, to whom we owe so much for their careful preservation of the Old Testament, have been charged with wilfully corrupting the Hebrew in this passage, thinking to get over this remarkable prophecy so wonderfully fulfilled by inserting I for U and making the verse read, "For dogs have compassed Me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me: as a lion My Hands and My Feet." Further evidence of this wilful corruption has been brought forward from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament made by Jews some two centuries before the Crucifixion took place: the Septuagint reads as our own English version has translated, "they pierced My Hands and My Feet." This example alone will suffice to show how easy it would have been for the Jews to tamper with prophecies relating to the suffering Messiah, and the fact that the Scribes were able to keep their fingers away from secret mutilation of the sacred words speaks volumes for the faithful execution of the trust committed to their charge.

Conjugations

Another kind of example illustrating the importance of small things in bringing out the force of the Hebrew language may be found in the use of the different conjugations of the verb. In many cases the only difference between one conjugation and another is the difference of a vowel. The general rule of grammars is that the A sound is used in verbs to express narrative, I is the vowel of intensity of action, and U or O is the sign of the passive. In Joshua vi. 1 we find an example of the same verb used twice in the same verse, but in different conjugations, and therefore with different meanings—" And Jericho had shut (the gates) and was bolted." (A.V., " Now Jericho was straightly shut up.") The verb in the first instance is in the Kal conjugation, and refers to the shut gates as opposed to open. In the second instance the verb is in the Pual conjugation, and signifies how they had been treated, fastened with bolts and bars. Our English translation simply states a bald fact that " Jericho was straightly shut up," but the Hebrew writer dwells upon the transaction leading the mind of the reader through successive stages to the final conclusion, as much as to say, " You must not think that the gates of Jericho at that time were open for any who liked to pass through, because orders had been given for the gates to be closed, and not only were they closed, but locked, barred, and strengthened in such a way that none

could open them," and the Vulgate has happily caught the picture in the writer's mind by translating, "Jericho autem clausa erat atque munita."

In Isa. xxix. 9 we have another example of the same verb used twice running in different conjugations, Hithpalpel and Kal, with different meanings in each. A.V., "Cry ye out and cry"; margin, "Take your pleasure and riot," or more literally as R.V., "Take your pleasure and be blind."

Gen. v. 22. "And Enoch walked with God," but the verb, being in the Hithpael conjugation, brings out a beautiful shade of meaning that "Enoch set himself to walk with God." The historian does not merely state that his life was one of private communion with the Deity, but, further, through the conjugation used, he brings out the patriarch's own determination to make his life that walk with God, and his resolve to keep it up.

Ex. viii. 22. Not simply, "I will sever in that day the land of Goshen," but the verb being in the Hiphil conjugation signifies, "I will miraculously separate."

Deut. i. 5. The Hiphil conjugation shows that Moses did more than "begin" to declare the law. The causative force of Hiphil means that "he made himself begin," in other words, he did so of his own accord, "Then Moses willingly undertook to declare this law."

Isa. lxv. 1. The English translation gives the correct meaning, but fails to do justice to the

derivation of the first verb and also the force of the conjugation :—

A.V., "I am sought (R.V. inquired) of them that asked not for Me." The root meaning of the verb Dhâ-rash is to rub, tread, approach, and implies something more than that a path had been made by supplicants ; it was a path that had been rubbed by the soles of sufficient feet to make a track, and carrying out this idea the passage might be rendered, "I have made a well-worn track towards Myself for those who never prayed."

One instance of a verb, and there are many such, which changes its meaning according to the conjugation used, may be found in the word Kha-lah. Its primary meaning is to be polished, and so smooth. This idea, however, of being rubbed down into smoothness can be used either with a favourable meaning in the Piel conjugation, as Ps. xlv. 12 (Heb. 13), "The rich among the people shall intreat thy favour," literally, "stroke thy face" ; or it can be used with an unfavourable meaning in the Niphal conjugation, signifying to be worn down and wearied out, as Jer. xii. 13, "They have put themselves to pain (literally, they are worn out) but shall not profit."

In 1 Sam. xiii. 12 we read in both the A.V. and R.V. that Saul said to Samuel, "I forced myself therefore and offered a burnt offering," but the Hebrew Â-phaq has exactly the opposite meaning in the Hithpael. Instead of "forcing one's self to do a thing," it means "to restrain one's self from giving

way to impulse," and we find the same verb in the same conjugation in Gen. xliii. 31 and xlv. 1 for Joseph "refraining himself" from his brethren. What Saul really said was, "I hesitated for some time whether to do it or not, and (only after such hesitation) I offered the burnt offering."

The causative force of the Hiphil conjugation will often paint a living picture before the mind which is lost when the meaning of the conjugation is not expressed, *e.g.*—

Prov. xiii. 5. "A righteous man hateth lying;
But a wicked man is loathsome and
cometh to shame."

Both words in the final clause are Hiphil, and allowing for this the passage may be rendered—

"A righteous man hateth lying;
But as for a wicked man (his very breath) spreads
pollution, and makes people blush."

When we write a letter to a friend, and wish to emphasise some particular word, our general custom is to underline that word, and if the letter gets into print the underlined word is put into italics. The Hebrew, however, had no italics to fall back on when he wanted to emphasise, nor yet any printing, and the idea never occurred to him of putting a line under the word, so he had to mark the emphasis in some other way. Sometimes he marked that particular word, as mentioned before, by the accent placed upon it, at other times by the place which

that word occupied at the beginning or end of the clause where it would catch the full inflexion of the voice and so be safe to reach the ears of the listener, or else if it was a verb he made the verb emphatic by putting it in the Intensive conjugation called Piel. If he wanted, for instance, to say that somebody not only broke an article, but broke it in pieces, he would use the word for break and put it in the Piel conjugation, to show not only that the thing was done, but also that it was done very thoroughly. For instance, in 2 Kings xviii. 4 there is nothing in the original beyond the Piel conjugation to express the thorough and determined way in which Hezekiah purged the Temple of its idolatry. Relying on this intensive force of the verb, our translators have rendered it, "he brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made," only to be consistent they should have also rendered the preceding clause with its emphatic Piel, " he shivered the images (R.V. pillars) to atoms."

This intensive force of the Piel conjugation as taking trouble to do the thing specified is beautifully illustrated in Ps. xlviii. 13, where it is said of Zion, the type of the Church, " consider her palaces," or literally, " diligently contemplate her high towers," the noble and exalted deeds of past days, and if this is done there will be less desire to consider her ruins and failures. As much as to say, " For pity sake think more of your blessings, and there will be less reason to growl over your disappointments."

Or take another case from that inexhaustible

treasury of the Psalms to show how much life and imagery the Hebrew could put into a verb by the conjugation he used, though we have to be content in our English speech with bare statement of fact. Ps. xlii. 4, the A.V. translates, "I went with them to the House of God," the idea conveyed to our minds is that he was one of the multitude. The R.V. improves the statement by saying, "I led them to the House of God," but the Psalmist, using the Hithpael conjugation, draws the picture of the procession as it took place—"I went slowly before them, like a bandmaster with his band, timing the steps to sound of music and chant of song," which he then passes on to describe.

Sometimes the shade of meaning introduced into a passage by the conjugation is not so obvious as in the instances that have been given, but the shade is none the less welcome to the translation because its colouring is more delicate. For instance, 1 Kings xx. 38, we read, "So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face" (R.V., "with his headband over his eyes"). The reason for this alternative reading we need not discuss, for the point to which attention is drawn is the conjugation of the verb for "disguised himself." It is the Hithpael that is here used, and it suggests that the prophet not only disguised himself, but "allowed himself to be searched for."

This section may now be concluded with an example to sum up what has been said in the case

of one verb. Take the verb Ga-dal, and notice the way in which the signification grows up from its root meaning and shades off into various ideas according to the conjugation used. Its root meaning is to twist or bind threads together, but unity is strength, and hence arose the idea of strength and greatness frequently found in the Kal conjugation and its derivatives, such as Gen. xxv. 27, "And the boys grew." Piel is to take care that it becomes great, used of the Nazarite in Num. vi. 5, "he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow." Hiphil has the causative force, "to make great or increase"; so Gen. xix. 19, "Thou hast magnified Thy mercy." Hithpael to show one's self great and act pompously; so Isa. x. 15, R.V., "Shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it?"

Prepositions

In most languages prepositions are small things, and expressed by few letters, like "by," "in," "to," "for," etc. In Hebrew they are very small, and are often expressed by one letter, which is joined as a prefix to the word it governs. For instance, Rê-shîth means "beginning"; B'rê-shîth means "in beginning." L' stands for the meaning "to" or "for"; and l' Da-vid, as we find at the heading of several Psalms, means "to or belonging to David," or as we find in our Bibles, "A Psalm of David." Our English only suggests the idea of possession or authorship, "One of David's Psalms." The

Hebrew does more and suggests the inspiration of the Psalm as well as its authorship, "A Psalm given to David."

It is only necessary to turn to the lexicon to see how many and varied are the meanings which each of these prepositions include, and in the course of translation the reader will soon perceive how a correct interpretation of the passage depends upon allowing to the preposition its correct signification.

For instance, it makes considerable difference doctrinally whether we translate Jacob's utterance in Gen. xxxvii. 35 as A.V., "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning," or as Onkelos and the Syriac Version translate it, "I will go down into the grave on account of my son mourning." The former implies the doctrine of Recognition after Death; the latter does not. And yet the difference between the two renderings turns on the meaning given to a preposition.

The Hebrew Min, often abbreviated to the single letter "m," means "out of," and that can mean "away from," "without," or it can mean "proceeding from," "because of," "by." So we have the two opposite renderings of Isa. liii. 8, A.V., "He was taken from prison and from judgment"; there was no interval between arrest and trial to consider the case, as when an ordinary case is put into prison, nor was there anything more than a pretence at justice, for arrest, trial, and judgment were all rushed through in one night. R.V., "By oppression and judgment He was taken away," by the

oppression of cruel judgment He was removed from the living. So again in Isa. xiv. 19 the meaning is not as given in A.V., "But Thou art cast out of Thy grave like an abominable branch," but as R.V., "Thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre," *i.e.* without being buried which was Thy due.

A striking illustration of the different powers of the same preposition is to be found in Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau by comparing the 28th with the 39th verse of Gen. xxvii. As our translation stands, it must seem to many that Esau in the end got very nearly as rich a blessing as his brother Jacob. In the first case, verse 28, Isaac is blessing Jacob and used Min in its partitive sense: "And God give thee of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth." In the second case, verse 39, speaking to Esau, who has just come in, Isaac uses Min in the privative sense, and gives the passage a totally different meaning: "Behold! away from the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling, away from the dew of heaven above, and by thy sword thou shalt live," etc.

The letter "B," meaning "in," "by," "among," prefixed to a word is another case of a small thing with much and varied meaning. It comes into that much criticised passage of Gen. vi. 3, where the A.V. translates ("And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man) for that he also is flesh." R.V., margin, "in their going astray they are flesh." A similar grammatical construction, however, with the same preposition, in 2 Chron. xxviii. 6, is

translated, " because they had forsaken." This allows the passage before us to be translated in a way that simplifies the difficulty—" And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always be humbled in man, because they have gone astray they are (but) flesh." The wickedness and violence that were done in the earth proved that they only cared for their animal appetites and had spurned the spiritual.

Another remarkable variety of meaning in the same letter " B " may be seen in Num. xxiii. 23, A.V., " Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." The Revisers, however, make this utterance of Balaam much more emphatic by giving another shade of meaning to the preposition, using " with " instead of " against "—

> " Surely there is no enchantment with Jacob,
> Neither is there any divination with Israel."

There was no practice of such foolish rites in the hosts of Israel, and therefore it was useless for Balaam to practise such rites against them. Or, it may mean, as others take it, that such is Jacob's protection by his Covenant God that he has no need of divination or magic arts.

Every nation, says the Talmud, has its special guardian angel, its horoscopes, its ruling planets and stars. But there is no planet for Israel. Israel shall look but to Him. There is no Mediator between those who are called His children and their Father which is in Heaven.

Joel ii. 12 may fairly be taken as the Church's motto for her season of Lent, as it is the opening verse of the Epistle for Ash Wednesday—"Turn ye even to Me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning." The idea of Lent as a call to those who have wandered is expressed in the first word, "Come back to Me," but still more emphatically is the completeness of the return, the continued strain of Lenten endeavour, expressed in the Hebrew preposition, "'ad," which is here used. It has the force not merely of direction "towards," which would have been expressed by another preposition, "el," but further, and more emphatically, of attainment, setting one's face towards the Mercy Seat, and never ceasing until it is reached. Come back to Me, saith the Lord, and keep on coming till ye come right up to Me, till every hindrance is removed, and the broken friendship is once again restored.[1]

Isa. i. 6 we find the same preposition, "'ad," emphasising the idea "to." "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it," or as it might be translated, "From the sole of the foot right up to the head there is no soundness in it."

Besides this power of exegesis the preposition often draws the picture which the Hebrew writer was so fond of making in the course of narrative.

[1] The present writer heard this point explained in a sermon by Bishop Ormsby at the Church of the British Embassy, Paris. The striking use that the preacher made of the point started the idea of writing this book.

For instance, Gen. xxiv. 30, Laban ran to see the man Rebekah had left at the well, not standing "by" the camels, but "above" them. Whilst the animals were resting on the ground the man stood and appeared taller than they.

Ex. x. 28. The preposition shows the excessive irritation of Pharaoh against Moses. He does not say as our translation, "Get thee from me," but literally "Go from (being a burden) on me."

The First Commandment (Ex. xx. 3) was a warning to Israel, not only that they were to worship the Lord, and Him before any other gods, as implied in our translation—"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me"—but further it was a warning against the more insidious temptation, before which they often fell, of practising idolatry whilst continuing at the same time the worship of the true God in tabernacle or temple—"Thou shalt have no other gods in addition to Me," or literally, on the top of Me.

In many cases the force of a Hebrew preposition has to be felt rather than expressed when translating. The idiom of our own language does not allow the writer's thought to be put into words without considerable redundancy, but none the less the finishing touch of a master's hand is there. The small things, represented perhaps by one letter, gives the word a delicate shade of meaning such as our translation is forced to ignore and leave untranslated.

The letter "L," for example, prefixed to a word is sometimes the sign of an "ethical dative," meaning

" to " a person when the idea is implied of its being to his own interest and advantage. It is generally found with verbs in the imperative mood signifying that it is worth his while to do the thing commanded. For instance, Gen. xii. 1, " Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country." In our translation it reads as if the command came to him suddenly without either rhyme or reason. The message, however, as Abram received it was, " Go for thyself out of thy country," as much as to say, " I strongly recommend thee to go ; it will be to thy advantage to do so." Imperatives with the same idea may be found in Deut. i. 7, 40, and ii. 3 ; Joshua vii. 10.

In Gen. xxi. 16 the A.V. has endeavoured to express this ethical dative, " and (Hagar) sat her down over against him a good way off," but the Hebrew preposition is more impressive, and pictures the disconsolate mother finding a place for herself that she might not see her dying son, " and she took a seat for herself (and by herself implied) over against him a good way off."

The preposition "'al," meaning " upon," expresses the idea of sorrow or adversity pressing upon a person as if it was some intolerable burden to bear. For instance, Jer. viii. 18, " my heart is faint in me." The order of the words is emphatic as well as the preposition, " upon me (as if there was no one else to share his sorrow) doth my heart languish."

Ps. xlii. 6. " O my God, my soul is cast down

within me," and more than "within me"; it is cast down upon me, and I find the burden more than I can bear. Similarly Ps. cxlii. 3, "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me," literally, upon me, and for the same Hebrew words see Jonah ii. 7. The bitter grief which Rachel's death left on the mind of Jacob is wonderfully expressed by the same preposition "'al" in Gen. xlviii. 7. Jacob on his deathbed is going over the past memories of life before his son Joseph, and says, "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me," literally, upon me. Only the force of a preposition, and yet it would be hard to put into words all the sorrow and sad recollections which that "upon me" implied.

CHAPTER V

ACCENTS

In addition to the vowel points or signs the reader will notice from the frontispiece that every Hebrew word also carries with it another mark called an accent. Sometimes the accent is above the word and sometimes below, and in a few cases both above and below. These accents are divided into two great groups, called Distinctive or Conjunctive, according to the purpose they serve in the narrative. The Distinctive accents, as the name implies, show that the word or clause is to be distinguished, *i.e.* separated from that which follows, and are much like our own stops; whilst the Conjunctives show that the word or clause is to be joined on to that which follows. The Distinctive accents are, however, more numerous than our stops because they measure with greater minuteness the precise length of each break, and because they also mark those slighter and sometimes hardly perceptible pauses which in most languages are regulated by the voice alone. The other kind named Conjunctives, and eleven in number, are peculiar to Hebrew; they show that the word to which one of them is attached is closely connected

in sense with that which follows. In English this would only be denoted by a smooth and unbroken pronunciation.

The Distinctives or stops are further divided into four classes, corresponding roughly with our full stop, colon, semi-colon, comma, and, say, a dash for a slight pause ; and a few cases might be quoted translating the Hebrew accents into our English stops to show how faithfully our translators have observed these accents :—

Gen. iii. 1. "Now the serpent was subtil, beyond any beast of the field—which the Lord God had made : and he said unto the woman, Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat—of every tree of the garden ? " Verse 3, "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it : lest ye die." The last three words, it will be noticed, are added emphatically as the reason following a considerable pause. (The above translation, like those following, are not taken from the A.V., but are given by Professor Driver in *Hebrew Tenses*.)

Ps. i. 1. "Happy is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked ; and in the way of sinners—hath not stood : and in the seat of the scornful hath not sat."

Ps. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I asked of the Lord, it will I seek for : that I should dwell in the house of the Lord—all the days of my life ; to gaze on the pleasantness of the Lord, and to meditate in His Temple."

Ps. xl. 12. "For evils have compassed me about—till they are beyond numbering; my iniquities have taken such hold upon me—and I cannot look up: they are more than the hairs of my head; and my heart hath forsaken me."

It is still a matter of controversy amongst scholars when these accents were first introduced,[1] but there can be little doubt that the purpose they were meant to serve was to perpetuate the sounds of the living voice handed down by tradition from generation to generation in the reading of the Scriptures in the synagogue services of the Jews. We said before that the narrative of Hebrew writ is like a cinematograph exhibition with its ceaseless film of living pictures, one following the other in rapid succession. This being the case, we may further liken the accents to a gramophone recording the actual tones of the human voice as handed down from the great leaders of Temple music, the Asaphs and sons of Korah. The reading of the Scriptures, whether narrative or poem, like all Oriental reading, was a kind of song, and these accents were something akin to the notes in our modern music.

"Between the prose and poetic books," writes the Rev. A. B. Davidson in *Hebrew Accentuation*, "some distinction was doubtless observed, inasmuch as the

[1] "I venture to think that accentuation had its origin in a comparatively recent period, the *terminus a quo* being the early part of the fifth century, at which time the Palestinian Talmud had been closed, and Jerome was dead; and that *ad quem* the close of the seventh century, when in all probability written signs were first employed on the accents."—W. Wickes.

poetic were more regular, more rhythmical, and more susceptible of real musical utterance. This solemn style of delivery was preserved by tradition, handed down almost as a part of the sacred Scripture itself; the tones of the ancestral voice were hallowed, the venerable accents in which the Word had been read from time immemorial were holy: a reverent posterity would not willingly let them die; they recalled, and ever onward and forward perpetuated, the living voices of holy men and prophets, many of whom had held communion with God Himself. And thus arose the Accentual System, and this its meaning. It is not and cannot be any remnant of the Temple music, for with reference to prose that is ridiculous, and all fundamental investigation demonstrates the priority of the prose accents, and indicates that these were used as the norm and standard of poetry. It is simply the synagogal delivery, the traditional living utterance of the reader, seized and photographed, and handed down to us as a precious monument of ancient pulpit oratory."

"A very singular specimen," says the same writer, "of bidding defiance to accent is to be found in Ps. xlv. 5, which the A.V. renders—

"'Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under Thee.' Reading this verse according to its accents the greatest pause is at 'sharp,' the next greatest is at 'thee,' and the final stop at 'king.' Translated in this way the passage would read—

"'Thine arrows are sharp:—
Peoples fall under Thee!—
In the heart of the enemies of the King!'

"Does it need a very powerful imagination to see a whole campaign here? A warrior—who is the fairest

of the sons of men, but yet the mighty God—is seen stalking into the field with the sharpened weapons—(first picture); the same mowing down nations—fields of slain (second picture); each with a well-aimed javelin in his heart! (third picture). The poet's imagination outruns his power of expression and makes his pictures hurried and irregular. He sees scene following scene with the rapidity of lightning, and utters a hasty half-broken exclamation at each new step in the warrior's progress—the preparation, the conflict, the victory."

It is a parallel from Scripture to the famous Roman message—*Veni, Vidi, Vici.*

Compare this rendering of the passage and the additional colouring given to it by the accents with that found in the A.V., and the reader can see at once how different a book the Bible becomes to one who is acquainted with the romance that lies behind the accents in the Hebrew language.

In Hosea vi. 10 the Revisers have accurately translated the Hebrew in the order that the words take in the original—"In the house of Israel I have seen an horrible thing." But faithful translation and accurate order of the words is not sufficient to bring out the pathos of the statement unless we also go on to read it with its accentual touches. Give the accents their force, and a plain statement is changed into the living voice of a prophet filled with horror and dismay, and almost losing breath as he gives vent to his indignation—

"In the house of Israel!
I have seen—an horrible thing."

Patriotism forces him to give first place in the sentence for sake of emphasis to the scene of the discovery: In the House of Israel—where one might hope to find things so different—I have seen with mine own eyes (he hardly likes to say what, and, after a slight pause, he adds, with hushed voice) an horrible thing.

Isa. lvii. 21 may mean—

"There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God," speaking of them, or

"There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked," speaking to them.

The accent is on the word "peace," showing that it should be rendered—

"No peace!
Saith my God to the wicked."

It is a defiance and proclamation of eternal war between Him and them, which God throws down before the wicked.

Gen. xxii. 14 is a verse which has received a marked variety of rendering both in ancient and modern times.

A.V., "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

Omitting the vowel points, the final clause might be translated in three different ways—

1. "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen or provided." Our English versions translate it this way. The accents, however, show that this is just

the way it is not to be translated, for they purposely explain that "the Lord" is to be taken with the words that follow, and not with those that precede.

2. "In the mount the Lord will be seen," and in this way the Septuagint translates it.

3. "In the mount the Lord will see or provide," as the Vulgate, Syriac, and Samaritan Versions have translated it.

S. Jerome, following the last rendering, brings out the shade of meaning which the accents of the passage suggest—"This became a proverb among the Hebrews, that if any should be in trouble, and should desire the help of the Lord, they would say, 'In the mount the Lord will see,' *i.e.* as He had mercy on Abraham and helped him in the time of sore distress, so will He have mercy on us."

Another well-known text in the Old Testament, and quoted in the New, is to be found in Isa. xl. 3, where the R.V. accurately gives the force of the Hebrew accents.

A.V., "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."
R.V., "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord."

According to the accentuation, it is not the voice that comes from the wilderness, but the voice proclaims that in the wilderness the work of preparation must begin, choosing the least likely and least promising places of the world for proclaiming the

Gospel. As all the great revolutions of past history teach us, the reformation of the world when it takes place will work its way up from the poor to the rich, it will not come from the rich down to the poor. The place from which it will start will be some bleak wilderness, not some rich and promising quarter; from a Nazareth rather than a Jerusalem. Read in this way, the text stands as the Old Testament parallel to our Saviour's teaching (S. Luke xiv. 23), "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in."

In Gen. iii. 22 we have a curious example where the meaning of a text has been entirely altered through neglecting the accents :—

"And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil."

This difficult text to understand, and to reconcile with the doctrine that God is not the author of evil, will have quite another aspect when the verb is grammatically rendered "hath been" instead of "is become," when the final clause literally translated "good and evil" is rendered as Hebrew idiom allows, "good through evil," and when the stops made by the accents are truly represented. We then get a much plainer meaning. "And the Lord God said, Behold the man, who like one of us hath been! is come to know good through evil."

By such a rendering it is manifest that man did not become like one of the Persons of the Godhead by his acquiring the knowledge of evil; but, contrariwise, by means of this acquisition he lost the

Likeness and the Image of God in which the Creator made him.

Deut. xxvi. 5. According to accents, this place cannot be translated, as our A.V. has done, "a Syrian ready to perish was my father," for that would require the distinctive accent over the word "perish." It must be rendered, "an Aramean (*i.e.* Laban) sought to destroy my father."

Judges xvi. 28. "And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." The latter part of the verse, according to accents, should be rendered, "Strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may avenge myself on the Philistines for one of my two eyes." The accent emphasises "one" in a remarkable way: Samson only asks vengeance for one eye, and Jewish commentators add that the reward for the other eye was to be in the world to come.

2 Kings xviii. 17. We have here a delightful example to show how easy it is for people with a little knowledge to criticise and find fault with Scripture, when a little more knowledge would show them that the mistake exists nowhere but in their own imagination, and if they only had eyes to see a warning against the very mistake which their imagination has conjured up is staring them in the face! In A.V. the passage runs, "And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh

from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem." The accents show that all three names, Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh, are not to be joined to Lachish, but that of Rabshakeh only. Remarkable, too, that this should be given as the correct punctuation of the verse from time immemorial. It is just one of those places which a shallow critic would love to get hold of, and think to advertise his own wits by proving Scripture wrong. He would first turn to Isa. xxxvi. 2, and say that as Tartan and Rabsaris are not mentioned they must have come later at the head of the second embassy (2 Kings xix. 9). This second embassy, however, was not sent from Lachish, but from Libnah, and therefore Scripture is wrong in 2 Kings xviii. 17, where it says that those men came from Lachish to king Hezekiah. If such a critic had only eyes to see what is to be seen, he would find that the only person who says they all three came from Lachish is himself. What Scripture does is to warn him against the very pit into which he has fallen. The names of the first two are carefully separated from Lachish by a special distinctive accent called L'garmeh, and Rabshakeh's name is joined to it in the regular way. Long as accents have stood there they have begged such shallow critics not to expose themselves, but to use a proper punctuation of the passage—"And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh from Lachish, to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem."

People who disapprove of incense as a part of

public worship frequently quote Isa. i. 13 as Scriptural ground for their objection. "Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto Me." Whether incense is advisable or not remains to be debated on other grounds, for this text has nothing whatever to do with the question. Allowing accents their due force the passage runs, "Bring no more vain oblations: incense of abomination is it (*i.e.* the vain oblation) to Me."

In the name given to the Child in Isa. ix. 6—"His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"—the comma is sometimes omitted between the first two titles, as if it should be read, "Wonderful Counsellor," but the accents show that each title, besides being emphasised, is also to be separated —His Name shall be called Wonder, Counsellor, etc.

Any one who wishes to make a real study of Hebrew accents will find invaluable assistance by consulting the two books by Dr. W. Wickes on the subject, one dealing with the poetical and the other with the prose books of the Old Testament. These are considered to be the standard English books upon the subject, but without making any deep study of Hebrew accents much helpful thought can be derived from a short work called *Sermons in Accents*, by the Rev. John Adams, and a few examples from this writer may well be quoted.

> Mal. iii. 17. A.V., "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."

R.V., "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts in the day that I do make, even a peculiar treasure."

It is not the jewels that are made up on that day. Even now they are God's purchased possession, and do not require to wait for the day of His appearing before they can be assured of their final destiny. It is the day, and not the jewels, that is the object of the verb "make," and the text implies that whether the faithful ones are recognised by those around or not, they will be openly acknowledged by the Lord in that day. What the prophet brings out concerning these jewels is—

(1) Their present standing in grace: valued as jewels.

(2) Their future standing in glory: openly declared to be such.

Isa. lxiii. 19. Neither A.V. nor R.V. is a happy rendering if we give the accents their proper value.

A.V., "We are Thine; Thou never barest rule over them."

R.V., "We are become as they over whom Thou never barest rule."

The idea the prophet wishes to express is the contrast between the holy people who had God for their Father (verse 16), and the adversaries who had come and trodden His sanctuary underfoot (verse 18). That contrast, alas! seemed to exist no longer. "We are become"—but how shall he utter the words? How shall he bring himself to admit that

Israel, the chosen nation, had become as the uncircumcised heathen? He cannot. The disjunctive accent at "become" involves a pause that must be filled up in some way; the truth is too ugly to pronounce, and the prophet will not bring himself to do it. It was left to a silence too deep for speech, a flood of emotion that overwhelms the utterance—"We are become—(like the heathen whose very name we loathe)—Thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by Thy Name."

It takes a whole paragraph to explain the prophet's thought to an English reader, but in Hebrew that meaning is made plain at a glance by observing the accent and its force.

Gen. iv. 15. Cain complains that as a fugitive in the earth his life will be in constant jeopardy—"whosoever findeth me shall slay me." But God answers, "Not so," (distinctive accent shows it is to be taken as a statement in itself, not like the A.V., "therefore," and connected with that which follows), "whosoever slayeth Cain vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." In the original manuscripts of the Bible the words were not separated from one another. What the distinctive accent and the Greek translation show were meant to be read as two separate words, lô chên, "not so"; the modern printed Hebrew Bible, followed by A.V., reads as one word, lâ-chen, "therefore."

Before concluding this short chapter on accents a few words must be said to disarm the reader of

any suspicion or uneasy feeling which the chapter may have raised in his mind. It may seem to him a hopeless task to think he can ever set about learning a language which contains so many peculiarities, where even a small accent can so materially change the meaning of a passage. If he is to learn first the grammar of a language, then the vocabulary, after that apply himself to translation, and when all that is done find himself at last baffled or thwarted by some small mark placed above or below the word he is reading, then the task will seem to him as one that he is never likely to master. For fear that the above examples may have raised some such uneasy feeling in his mind, he needs to be told that there is no need whatever to be alarmed about any complication over accents. When any one learns Hebrew he wants to know three or four of the leading Distinctives, because they mark the end of each verse and the chief pauses that must be made in each verse, but all the rest he can well afford to leave alone until he has attained sufficient efficiency to desire the further lights which these accents throw on the narrative. Many attain to considerable fluency in translation without troubling about the accents at all, except the few chief ones. The examples that have been quoted are to be taken as exceptions rather than the rule, for, as was shown in the quotations from Professor Driver at the beginning, our Authorised Version has followed the punctuation given by accents with marked fidelity. Cases which a writer looks out to illustrate the romance

of a language are not to be taken as normal unless they are stated to be such at the time. The Jews call these accents Taim, which means "taste," or "flavour"; they add a charm of their own to translation when rightly understood, as salt adds piquancy to the Scotchman's bowl of porridge, but still there are some who prefer to eat their porridge without any salt at all.

No one, therefore, need shrink from Hebrew as if accents were likely to prove the last straw that would break the camel's back. Let him set about the task, and though he will find several difficulties to contend with at the commencement, yet he will find that every day's work will make the subject pleasanter, if not easier, and he will discover, as the Norsemen believed of old, that the strength of the slain foe enters the conqueror, and every difficulty which he overcomes will make him twice the man to tackle the next.

CHAPTER VI

HEBREW TENSES

AMONGST all modern English writings which help to a right interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures first place must be readily assigned to Professor Driver's work on *Hebrew Tenses*. The insight which it gives to the Hebrew language as something totally different from our Western modes of speech is truly marvellous, and in no way is this difference more clearly marked than in the force and meaning of tenses.

To one who has been accustomed to read his Bible in English it comes as a surprise, which he can hardly take in at first, that the Hebrew verb is really devoid of tenses, and that Perfect, Present, Imperfect, or Future are only terms borrowed from our Western grammars and applied to the Jewish.

It marks nothing short of a revolution in one's treatment of the sacred tongue to find one's self suddenly introduced to a language which not only breathes the words and thoughts of the Eternal Being, with Whom there is neither past nor future, but in its very structure is framed to deal with life from His point of view, and to regard events not as

past or future, but rather as complete or incomplete, according as they have fulfilled or are waiting to fulfil their destined end. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and their utterance finds vent in a manner of speech which is absolutely distinct from the rules of Western grammar.

To quote Dr. Driver—

"In Hebrew the tenses mark only difference in the kind of time, not differences in the order of time, that is, they do not in themselves determine the date at which an action takes place, they only indicate its character or kind, the three phases of incipiency, continuance and completion being represented respectively by the imperfect (sometimes called the future), the participle, and the perfect. The first describes action as nascent, beginning to take place, and in this sense imperfect, whilst the latter describes the action as completed, and so as perfect. Upon these two facts the whole theory of the tenses has to be completed."

It is a remarkable fact that this idiom of the Hebrew language has been found to also exist in the dialects of Polynesia and Melanesia, and we must leave it to the ethnologists to decide whether it affords any clue to discover the relations between these islanders and the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. No one was better qualified to speak of these peoples beneath the Southern Cross than Bishop Patteson, and he writes as follows :—

"I believe it to be quite true that the mode of thought of a South Sea Islander resembles very closely

that of Semitic man. The Hebrew narrative of the Old Testament viewed from the Melanesian standpoint is wonderfully graphic and lifelike. An Englishman says, 'When I get there it will be night'; but a Pacific Islander says, 'I am there, it is night.' The one says, 'Go on, it will soon be dark'; the other, 'Go on, it has already become night.' The savage, like the ancient Hebrew, possesses the power of realising the future as present or past, and shapes his speech accordingly, but the actual idea of time, so important to our minds, is not inherent in the tense at all."

In the same way the Hebrew's mind and his speech moved on with his thought; he threw himself either backward or forward into the scene he describes as if he himself was a part of the scene, and it would perhaps be more correct if we spoke of the Hebrew verb having three senses rather than so many tenses.

The idiom is one of those which our language is unable to reproduce: the reader must feel the force of the tense in Hebrew, and if he does he will find each detail of the scene as it is described moving before him like some animated picture thrown once again on the sheet for his special benefit. Not a page of the Hebrew, nor yet a verse, will fail to respond to this magic wand, and as he grows familiar with the new usage he will notice the ease and rapidity with which a writer changes his standpoint, at one moment speaking of a scene as though remote in the distant future, at another moment describing it as if it were already present to his gaze.

Take, for example, Isa. v. 27. The prophet is describing the swift and overwhelming destruction about to fall on the sinful nation when the Lord should call the nations from afar to swoop down on the Holy Land and execute vengeance. " None shall be weary nor stumble among them ; none shall slumber nor sleep ; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken."

Now turn to the Hebrew and see how much more striking is the imagery of the verse owing to the variation which the prophet makes in the tenses of the six verbs employed in that verse. The first two verbs are in the participle, representing the habitual condition of the invading force, the second two are in the imperfect as Isaiah sees the terrible hosts approaching with full and relentless vigour, and the last two are in the perfect, for the hosts have advanced near enough in the prophet's vision to notice the details of each warrior's equipment. As accurate rendering of the tenses we therefore get, " There is no being weary, and no falling out of the ranks of that host ; none shall slumber nor sleep (look at them ; there they are, close at hand !) : not one of the girdles of their loins hangs loose, not one of the fastenings of their shoes is broken."

A special characteristic of Hebrew narrative which the reader may notice from this example is a love for variety in expression. The writer, no longer contenting himself with a series, for instance, of imperfects or futures, diversifies his language in

a manner which mocks any effort to reproduce in Western speech. As he lays hold of each detail in his description he invests it with a character of its own, and presents his reader with a picture of surpassing brilliancy and life : at one time you see the detail emerging into light, at another the tense or sense of the verb shows the thing described actually moving before your eyes. " The words of the Hebrew tongue," says Luther in *Table Talk*, " have a peculiar energy. It is impossible to convey so much as briefly in any other language. To render them intelligibly we must not attempt to give word for word, but only aim at the sense and idea."

Take another example, Gen. xxxvii. 7, where Joseph is describing his dream of the sheaves to his brethren. R.V., " Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright ; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf." In the original the verb " came round about " is not the perfect, as would appear from the translation, but the imperfect, showing that the action was in progress. So that one can almost picture the boy Joseph pointing with his finger to the scene of the dream as he describes it to his brothers, " and, behold, your sheaves began to move round, and to make obeisance to my sheaf."

Sometimes the touch added to the narrative by the variety of tense is of a distinctly sensational character, as we find in the passage Judges v. 24–27, where the death of Sisera at Jael's hand is described.

In this passage we have a continued series of verbs in the perfect tense suddenly turned into the imperfect in the case of one verb, where our translation runs, "she put her hand to the nail." The writer draws special attention to this clause of the narrative by putting it in the imperfect. Giving the tense its proper significance, we might better translate, "she gradually stretched forth her hand towards the tent-pin," and doing so, we can readily picture to our minds the furtive manner in which Jael stretched over towards the peg, watching the eyes of the sleeper as she did so for fear the motion might waken him from his sleep.

Observing the tense, the reader will often be able to give familiar words quite a new shade of meaning, and clearer than he will find in the usually accepted version, *e.g.* Isa. xxx. 19, "He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry: when He shall hear it He will answer thee." The latter clause of the verb should be translated, "as soon as He heareth He hath answered thee." (Cf. Isa. lxv. 24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer: and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.") The R.V., which generally pays strict attention to tense, has missed this case, translating, "when He shall hear He will answer thee."

In Ps. vii. 15 we have another example to show how the vividness of the picture in the original has disappeared when translated into English. "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch

which he made." The last verb of this sentence, however, is in the imperfect, showing that the trap was not completed, but in course of construction. "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley," as Haman found out (Esther vii. 9, 10), and just before the plot matures the mischief-worker finds himself hoisted with his own petard. Giving the tense its due force, the verse is better translated, "He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch whilst he was making it."

Ps. lv. 14. "We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the House of God in company," or more literally, "we used to walk unto the House of God in company." The imperfect tense that is used implies habitual custom, not something that was done once or twice. The aggravation of the Betrayal, applying the words to Judas Iscariot, consisted not merely in the fact of his being seen to go to the House of God with his Master and the other Apostles, but that he had repeatedly done so.

Again, Ps. xcv. 10. "Forty years long was I grieved (imperfect) with this generation." This does not imply that the provocation was continuous, as our translation suggests. For this idea the participle would have been used, but the imperfect means that the provocation was repeated on special occasions during the forty years.

Deut. xii. 31. "For even their sons and their daughters have they burnt (R.V. do they burn) in the fire to their gods." The imperfect in this passage has a special historical importance, for it

shows that human sacrifices were not a thing of the past, but still in use in Canaan at the time of the Israelitish Conquest.

As mentioned in this instance, the Revisers have paid strict attention to tense in their work of translation, and by comparing the A.V. with the R.V. the reader will frequently come across cases where a different construction is given to the passage by allowing verbs the due signification of their tenses.

Ps. xxxii. 5. A.V., "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." We have in this verse a variety of tenses thrown together in what looks like a bewildering confusion, but allow each tense its right signification and the result is a perfect focus in the picture of an awakening conscience. "My sin I began to make known (incipient imperfect), and mine iniquity have I not hid (present perfect).

"I said, I will confess (a continual unfolding of the past till all is told) my transgressions unto the Lord;

"And Thou, Thou forgavest (the instantaneous word of pardon like the Greek aorist) the iniquity of my sin."

The first verb (I began to make known) graphically represents the consciousness of sin when it first begins to dawn on the sinner's conscience, and the change of tense in the second verb (have I not hid) from imperfect to the perfect shows how

speedily the second stage is reached. The moment that the wound is touched the smart is felt. The sense of guilt is beyond endurance, and there, like heart answering heart in an inner sanctuary, the Divine response is granted to the silent appeal—I will : be thou clean.

If no fewer than three Hebrew terms were required to describe the sin, each with its own shade of meaning, sin, iniquity, transgression, then three similar figures are necessary to depict the unburdening of the load—I began to make known, I have not hid, I will confess, and the result when it comes about was instantaneous as a flash of lightning—Thou forgavest. It is at once the lifting of a burden, the covering of a foul stain, and the cancelling of a debt. In our Bible the passage is quickly read and then passed over, but a study of the words and tenses contained therein makes the description so lifelike, the experience so personal, one can almost see the hand that is being raised from the overwhelming sea towards the Cross.

Equally graphic is the song of Israel as they stand on the shore of the Red Sea and behold the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host. Ex. xv. 5. " The deeps cover them," as if they were witnessing the scene taking place before their eyes. This lifelike touch is lost, and the description is made comparatively tame in the translation of A.V., " The depths have covered them."

Judges vi. 5. We read how the marauding bands of the Midianites " came up " to harass and destroy

Israel. "For they came up with their cattle, and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it." The invasion is described sufficiently to explain the serious damage that was done, but in addition to that description the tense of the verb "came up," which is imperfect, must be allowed its force to show that the invasion was not made once, but repeated again and again. "They used to come up" season after season to waste and pillage the land.

Hab. iii. 3. "God cometh (imperfect) from Teman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran."

In this and the following verses the great deliverances of the past are vividly depicted as an evolving present; the past reveals forces that have been put in motion and are still at work.

And so with that grand outburst of praise—Ps. lxviii.—which has been called the Te Deum of the Old Testament, the opening chord loses much of its magnificence when translated as a wish, "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered." The great truth as expressed by the imperfect is not merely a hope or a prayer that God would arise and make His power known, but what must arrest attention with even greater force. "God is already beginning to arise, and His enemies to scatter." The rout has begun, and time alone is needed to vindicate His honour.

"This," writes the Rev. R. G. Moulton in *The Modern Reader's Bible*, "is one of the masterpieces of the world's lyrics: even in the diluted English version it is difficult to meet this mighty marching song without the feet longing to tramp, and the hands to wave. . . . Originally no doubt composed for some specific occasion its terms are nevertheless so general that it might serve for any triumphant occasion. It is a processional hymn, and it breathes the spirit of triumphal procession into its survey of past, present, and future."

And the opening note of this great song of praise is struck not by the expression of pious expectation from the lips of mortal, "Let God arise," but by appealing to the silent and irresistible Power that is leading our world through the course of the ages towards Righteousness and Peace.

In Job iii. 17 we find the familiar verse which has proved of consolation to many, and yet its real significance cannot be grasped without perceiving the force of the tenses used—

> "There the wicked cease (perfect) from troubling;
> And there the weary be at rest (imperfect)."

The former conception is negative and therefore completed, as the perfect implies, but the latter is positive and therefore continuous and progressive, big with the promise of what may yet be, when the rest of Paradise has done its perfect work. Rest, quiet, and peace are not held out in Scripture as ends to be sought in themselves, as if the idea of final bliss was to sit still and do nothing. Rather they are the means through which the soul passes on to

a further end and aim of existence, necessary stages in the next sphere of existence in order to reach the glorious goal beyond. So it may be noticed in the 23rd Psalm (verse 2) that the shepherd does not lead his sheep *to* the waters of comfort or refreshment, as if they marked the final attainment, but "beside," or, more literally, "upon," them, showing that they are the sources by which the soul is strengthened for nobler effort.

2 Kings v. 18 bears a very different interpretation from that which is generally given to it when the tenses of the verbs receive their correct significance. It is often quoted as if Naaman was stating a hypothetical case, and asking permission to attend a place of worship not in accordance with his newly found faith, should his master ask him to do so. So far, however, was Naaman from imagining he could ever again countenance idolatry that he asked pardon from the man of God for having countenanced idolatry in the past, and the verse should read, "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant that when my master went (not goeth) into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaned on my hand and I bowed myself; the Lord pardon thy servant that I bowed (not when I bow) myself in the house of Rimmon."

Num. xxiv. 17 is generally quoted as if it referred to some future event—"there shall come a Star out of Jacob"—and some who take this statement exactly as it stands in the A.V. have both connected this Star coming out of Jacob with the

Star of Bethlehem, and have also endeavoured to prove a connection between Balaam and the Wise Men of the East (S. Matt. ii.). However, the original shows that Balaam did not say a Star shall come, but a Star hath come out of Jacob. The wonder, that is the multitude of Israel, was there straight in front of them all. In the same way Isa. xi. 9 is often taken as if the prophet was speaking of a great spiritual revival which yet remains to be fulfilled, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." If the conjunction that introduces the clause is translated "for," the rendering would be, "for the earth is full (or hath been full) of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." It is more probable, however, that the conjunction had a conditional force, and the whole verse should be translated, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, when the earth becomes full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," or as S. Paul words the same idea, "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19). All creation waits for the mitigation of suffering when men shall show that they are the sons of God, and become filled with the knowledge of the Lord. In the same way the Talmud teaches, "the Bible was given to establish peace."

Participle

Like the two tenses already considered, the participle indicates the character of the action without fixing the date, and the animated representation of particular scenes is enhanced by observing its use. Take, for example—

Ps. xxxii. 1. "Blessed is he whose transgression
is forgiven (participle)
Whose sin is covered (participle)."

The participle that is used in either clause in place of the ordinary tenses depicts not simply a state of forgiveness, resulting from a completed action in past time (which would have required the perfect), nor yet a succession of definite acts of forgiveness (which would have required the imperfect), but it is the picture of a man who has the blessing of forgiveness continually exercised upon him, a blessing that presses on him for entrance, like the air he breathes, and invigorating his spirit with a sense of Divine Power.

Ps. iii. 2. "Many there be which say of my soul,
There is no help for him in God."

The verb for "say" is in the participle "are saying," and represents the unceasing hostility of backbiting tongues which keep on reviling him in his distress.

Ps. cxxii. 2. "Standing are our feet
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem,"

not "shall stand," as A.V. renders. The toilsome pilgrimage is ended, and the pilgrims give vent to their feelings as they enjoy the long-desired rest and worship within the City of the Great King.

Isa. i. 21. "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers." The contrast is vivid between Jerusalem in her glory and in her days of apostacy, but we lose the deep sigh of the prophet by neglecting the force of the participle in the word translated "murderers." Righteousness, he says, used to lodge (imperfect) in the city, but now assassins (an intensive Piel participle, meaning those who make murder a profession).

How much more realistic the imagery becomes when we read as we should in Isa. v. 11, "Woe unto them that are in the habit of rising up early, that they may follow strong drink"; or when we turn to the picture of the righteous man in Ps. i. 2 and render, "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law he is in the habit of meditating day and night."

CHAPTER VII

JEWISH PRESERVATION

The romance of the Hebrew language is nowhere better seen than in the miraculous preservation of the book which has preserved that language to the world. More than romance, it is a feeling of deepest awe when we consider the unique position which that Book has occupied in the regard of men, and the fierce and ceaseless persecution it has received on account of that position. It contains the most ancient records in the world, coming down to us from the very beginnings of the human race, and surviving the risks and dangers which have destroyed and mutilated the other writings of ancient literature. When we think of the famous Greek poet Homer, and remember that there is a difference of five hundred years between the earliest and the latest dates given for his birth, and that deep obscurity surrounds every detail of his life, so much so that some doubt whether such a person ever lived, and then remember how much further Moses carries us back into the dim ages of the past, our wonder is not that there should be certain difficulties to contend with in the Pentateuch, but that there

should be any firm solid ground to go upon. If there are disputes as to the exact reading of many passages in Shakespeare, although he lived in the age of printing, and wrote in the English tongue, is it surprising that there should be some uncertainties about a comparatively few passages written in Hebrew several centuries before Christ?

The writings of Moses and of the other Hebrew seers have not only survived, but, in spite of their hoary antiquity, are intelligible, and when collected into a volume can be read from beginning to end by a person of ordinary mental power without much difficulty. Correctly they form a "library," as Nehemiah is said to have called them (2 Maccabees ii. 13), and though a vast interval separates the first volume of the collection from the last, yet they are found all to agree together and to be the gradual unfolding of one regular and progressive plan.

"Whence but from heaven, could men, unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain and martyrdom their price."

Now, it is a curious fact that the oldest copy known to exist of a Hebrew Old Testament is some six centuries younger than the oldest which we have of the Greek New Testament. The very oldest Bible in the world is called the Vatican Manuscript

in the Vatican library at Rome, and has been assigned to about 350 A.D. It is a manuscript written in the Greek language and consists of some seven hundred pages of the finest vellum, about a foot square, bound together in book form. It is not quite perfect, having lost Genesis, chapters i.–xlvi., as well as Psalms cv.–cxxxvii., and all after Hebrews ix. 14 of the New Testament. But the oldest dated Hebrew manuscript at present known to exist is kept at S. Petersburg, and is put down to a period so comparatively recent as 916 A.D. There is an Oriental manuscript of the Pentateuch in the British Museum which consists of 186 pages, and Dr. Ginsburg considers that "though not dated, it was probably written about A.D. 820–850." Both these manuscripts are rightly claimed as the oldest copies of the Hebrew Bible yet discovered, and Dr. Kennicott, a great expert in such matters, states that almost all our existing Hebrew manuscripts were written between 1000 and 1400 A.D. Out of some 800,000 various readings about 799,000 are of as much importance to the sense of the Hebrew Scriptures as the question is in English orthography whether "honour" should be spelt with "u," or without it, "honor." There must have been an enormous number of Hebrew manuscripts to meet the requirements of public use in the synagogues alone, without calculating those in private use, for we are told that there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem at the time of our Blessed Lord. The wholesale disappearance of these manuscripts off

the face of the earth is accounted for partly by the perishable nature of the papyrus material on which they were usually written, partly by the innate love of the Jews for burying what they considered valuable, and partly by the various persecutions when copies of the Scriptures were diligently sought out and burned.

"It cannot be doubted," writes Ad. Neubauer, "that the Jews, when dispersed over the world, were provided with copies of the Pentateuch, besides the Lessons from the Prophets, the Psalms, and the book of Job, which are all used in the synagogues on the Sabbath, Festivals, and Fast Days. Not a leaf of these copies is known to exist at the present time. We may ask, where are all the copies without vowel points, which were certainly not introduced before the sixth century (A.D.) at the earliest? Did they all perish in the frequent persecutions of the Jews, or were they destroyed when the vowel points were introduced, or do fragments of them still exist in some old synagogue, hidden away in remote corners? We hope that the last suggestion may prove to be the correct one, and that after thorough searching in the East some of these fragments may be brought to light, as was the case of the MS. of A.D. 916 now at S. Petersburg" (*Studia Biblica*, vol. iii. p. 22).

Notice the extraordinary importance of this point. Every book and every verse which we have of the Hebrew Old Testament comes to us from a date considerably later than the introduction of vowel points; but the insertion of vowel points means practically the translation of the original

text by Masoretic authorship, and a really original text of the Hebrew Bible has yet to be found! Where the words unpointed are capable of various meanings the Jews by their pointing have decided which of all those various meanings was to be selected, and the sense we find in the passage is the sense which they give, just as the rendering of a translator into another language is his sense, and not necessarily the sense of the copy before him.

Now, if we place the date of Moses as about 1300 B.C., and our oldest dated copy of the writings of Moses in 916 A.D., we have an interval of over two thousand years between the date of authorship and the date of the manuscript. The question, therefore, before us is, How can we make sure that a book written by a Jewish scribe about the time that King Alfred was reigning in England accurately represents what was written by Moses some thirteen centuries before Christ? To answer that question satisfactorily we would want to name writers who both used and quoted the Old Testament long before 916 A.D.; we would have to show that the Bible known to Christ and His Apostles was the same as what we now call the Old Testament, and we would need to mention the translations made of the Old Testament into other languages such as the Latin called the Vulgate, the Syriac called the Peshito, and especially the Greek known as the Septuagint and written for Greek-speaking Jews about 180 B.C. These various authorities have been so fully consulted, so accurately compared one with

the other, that there is no more room left for us to doubt that the manuscripts of 916 A.D. and later truthfully represent the exact words of Moses, David, Isaiah, and the other writers of the Old Testament books than we have to doubt that a copy of the *Merchant of Venice*, issued, say, by the Clarendon Press at Oxford, truthfully represents the original words of our English poet. The part of the question with which we are concerned is the preservation of the Hebrew Scriptures whilst they were in the hands of the Jews, and that preservation, when we consider the history of the Jews, is nothing less than miraculous.

Like a soldier swimming across some torrent to his engagement, with one arm battling against the waters which threaten to engulf him, whilst he uses the other to hold his rifle over his head that it may be kept dry and serviceable for the battle into which he is sent, so the Jews, persecuted and driven from land to land, have preserved the text of the Old Testament writings with scrupulous fidelity as if it was the one weapon of warfare by which they were destined to fulfil their mission amongst the nations of the earth. "What advantage, then, hath the Jew?" asks S. Paul in Rom. iii. 1, 2, "or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." It was a Jew who said that, and when he said it he was only voicing what every Jew felt to be the chief pride and glory of his nation. Indeed, the respect both felt and shown by the Jews

towards their Bible came very little short of downright superstition, and a scribe copying the writings of Moses or one of the Prophets would no more have dared to wilfully change, add, or omit a single letter of the sacred writing than he would have dared to set foot inside the Holy of Holies.

The marvellous attention and veneration paid by Jewish scribes to the letter of Scripture can perhaps be best illustrated by referring to a Jewish manuscript in the possession of Dr. C. D. Ginsburg, and described by him in his *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, 1897.

"I possess," he writes, "a MS. of the Pentateuch in which every two pages are followed by a page containing two tables. These tables register, line for line, the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurs in the two corresponding pages, as well as the number of words in each line. At the end of each table, the sum total is given of each separate letter, and of the words in the pages in question."

On the following page the learned doctor gives a specimen of the "Text and Tables of the first page of the MS."

With such marked fidelity and veneration on the part of a Jewish scribe for every word and letter of the sacred writings an English critic ought to be very careful before he lays any charge against the Jews of corrupting the text committed to their charge.

"That much scrupulous pains would be bestowed by Ezra, 'the ready scribe in the law of Moses,' and by his companions," writes the Rev. J. F. Thrupp (*Smith's Dictionary Old Testament*), "on the correct transmission of those Scriptures which passed through their hands is indeed antecedently probable. The best evidence of such pains, and of the respect with which the text of the sacred books was consequently regarded, is to be found in the jealous accuracy with which the discrepancies of various parallel passages have been preserved, notwithstanding the temptation which must have existed to assimilate them to each other. Such is the case with Psalms xiv. and liii., two editions of the same hymn. Such also is the case with Psalm xviii. and 2 Samuel xxii., where the variations between the two copies are more than sixty in number."

Now, it stands to reason that no writer of his own accord would perpetuate mistakes in his manuscript if he wanted to commend his work to others; if he saw a mistake of any kind in the scroll he was copying he would naturally feel inclined to remove it, and yet this is exactly what the Jewish scribes would not do. When a mistake got into a manuscript it remained there, and, more than that, it not only stayed in that particular manuscript, but also it was repeated again in every manuscript copied from it. So faithful were these scribes in copying the text exactly as it lay before them, word for word and letter for letter, that when they came to a transparent blunder on the part of the writer who came before them, they felt bound to repeat his blunder in their own copy. This seems scarcely

credible to our modern ways of thinking, but any one can open a Hebrew Bible and prove it for himself. In certain passages there are letters printed upside down, and the curious thing about them is that neither writer nor printer will turn those letters right side up; in other passages we are suddenly confronted with a letter considerably larger than others in the line or on the page; whilst in other passages we find letters smaller than the rest; and in still further passages we come across words which have a lot of dots over them, and these dots are neither vowels nor accents. Mistakes like these must have crept in through the fault of some copyist, but they keep on being repeated, and the Jews show that they mean to keep them by drawing attention to them and inventing ingenious arguments to justify their existence.

Take the dotted words first. There are fifteen of them in the Old Testament (Gen. xvi. 5; xviii. 9; xix. 33; xxxiii. 4; xxxvii. 12; Num. iii. 39; ix. 10; xxi. 30; xxix. 15; Deut. xxix. 28 (29); Ps. xxvii. 13; 2 Sam. xix. 20; Isa. xliv. 9; Ezek. xli. 20 and xlvi. 22). In certain cases the dots are explained as pointing the reader's attention to a blunder in order that he may be warned against it. For instance, in Num. iii. 39 we read of "the Levites which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the Lord." In the Hebrew there is a dot over each letter of the word, "and Aaron," and these dots are meant to show that the scribe wrote "Moses and Aaron" mechanically, and the

latter name should be omitted as in verses 14, 16, and 40 of the same chapter.

Deut. xxix. 29 (Heb. 28). "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

There are eleven dots over the Hebrew for "belong unto us and to our children for," and a Jewish scholar explains their appearance by saying, "The points mean, If ye fulfil the revealed laws I will reveal unto you the hidden also" (*i.e.* the Eleventh Commandment).

In another case the explanation is as humorous as it is ingenious—Gen. xxxiii. 4, where the meeting is described between Esau and Jacob, "And Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him: and they wept." The Hebrew for "and kissed him" is vay-yi-sha-qê-hû, but there happens to be a dot over each letter of the word, so an ingenious scribe suggested as explanation that one letter in the word should be changed in reading, that a Caph should be read in place of Qoph; this would make the word to mean, "and bit him," and the six dots were placed there to illustrate the marks of the teeth!

Another explanation as curious as the last is that which the Talmud gives on Gen. xxxvii. 12, "And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem." The word for "flock" in Hebrew has two dots over it, and the traditional explanation of these dots is that the brothers went to feed

themselves, not the flock, or else they went to feed on the flock !

The letter still printed upside down is the Hebrew " N," and instances of it can be found in the Hebrew Bible at the beginning of verse 35 and end of verse 36 in Num. x., and at the beginning of verses 23 to 28 and also verse 40 of Ps. cvii.

The cases are more numerous where large letters are to be found—that is to say, about half as large again as the rest on the page. The English reader can see a similar illustration to this in his Bible in Jer. xxiii. 6, " this is His Name whereby He shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS " (cf. also Ex. iii. 14). In our Authorised Version four words or twenty-three letters are printed in capital letters, whereas the Hebrew instances are of single large letters in each case. We call them " large " instead of capital letters, for all Hebrew is printed and written in capitals ; the small letters known as the " cursive " (*i.e.* running or writing style) were brought in much later by Rabbinical writers. There are twenty-nine instances of these large letters occurring in the Old Testament, but the two most notable are Lev. xi. 42 and Deut. xxxii. 4. In Lev. xi. 42 the Vav is written large to show that it is the middle letter of the Pentateuch. In Deut. xxxii. 4 we read, " He is the Rock (Hebrew hats-tsûr), His work is perfect." The first letter of tsûr is written large, the Talmud explains, to show that God is the First Principle, the Cause of all things.

Job ix. 34. "Let Him take His rod away from me." In the Masoretic Bible the Hebrew word Shibh-To (His rod) has the letter Teth in the middle written large. Teth, however, is the Hebrew letter for "9," and the Masora explains its being written large on this occasion by saying it was meant to signify the nine calamities under which Job suffered and which he wished God to remove.

Exactly opposite to the above instances are the Minuscules or small letters, written smaller than the rest on the page, and there are thirty cases of these Minuscules in the Old Testament, though they are not printed in all editions. Curious, too, are the explanations that have been given in certain of these instances to justify the continuation of what was evidently a mistake. For instance, there is a small "H" in Gen. ii. 4 in the Hebrew for "when they were created." ("These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created.") The explanation given by tradition is that the Minuscule is meant to indicate that all created things are small and perishing. Again, in Gen. xxiii. 2 we read, "And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her." In the last Hebrew word translated "and to weep for her" there is a small Caph, and the reason given is that it is meant to show Abraham did not weep to excess for Sarah!

Besides these dotted letters, inverted Nuns, large and small letters, there are also four cases in

the Old Testament of suspended letters, *i.e.* letters placed above the line on which they should be standing. One case we find in Judges xviii. 30, where the "n" in Manasseh is suspended above the line. The Talmud says that Gershom, who is here referred to, was really the son of Moses, but because he did the acts of Manasseh (2 Kings xxi.) he was described in this passage as the son of Manasseh. The meaning is that the prophet did not like to call Gershom the son of Moses because it would appear ignominious that such a man should have such a son. The word Manasseh was therefore written instead of Mosheh with the letter "n" suspended in the hope that readers would take to be the case what the scribe did not dare to write.

In Job xxxviii. 15 we find the letter Ayin suspended in the word Resha'-îm, which means "the wicked." The Talmud on this passage says, Why is the Ayin suspended? It is to teach that when a man is Rash—*i.e.* poor in this world—he will also be Rash or poor in the world to come; or, literally, poor below he will also be poor above!

Passing over these cases, we come to others of more importance where the Hebrew word for "not" is written instead of "to him" or "his." The pronunciation in either case is the same, lô, but the spelling in Hebrew is different. Lamedh aleph means "not," and lamedh vav means "to him" or "his." But one word was apt to be mistaken for the other because Aleph was much like Vav in ancient Hebrew. We must also bear in mind that

the word was written by hand, not printed. Fifteen instances are given where this error crept in—Ex. xxi. 8; Lev. xi. 21; xxv. 30; 1 Sam. ii. 3; 2 Sam. xvi. 18; 2 Kings viii. 10; Isa. ix. 3; lxiii. 9; Ps. c. 3; cxxxix. 16; Job xiii. 15; xli. 4; Prov. xix. 7; xxvi. 2; Ezra iv. 2; compare also Isa. xlix. 5; 1 Chron. xi. 20; 1 Sam. ii. 16; xx. 2.

Most people know about "The Wicked Bible," so named because the word "not" is omitted in Ex. xx. 14, and the Commandment was made to read, "Thou shalt commit adultery." It is said that when Archbishop Laud brought this monstrous misprint to the notice of Charles I. his Majesty directed the entire impression of this Bible to be suppressed, and imposed a heavy fine on its erring printers. Without being so monstrous, but equally dangerous, has the English translation stood for centuries, where "not" has been mischievously inserted in Isa. ix. 3, as if the great prophet were preaching against over-population, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy." The Revisers have noticed the error and translated, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, Thou hast increased their joy."

Another notable correction of the same kind occurs in Ps. c. 3—

A.V. "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.'
R.V. "It is He that hath made us, and we are His."

The modern editions of the printed Hebrew Bible, it is worth mentioning, are all based on Van

der Hooght. The earliest of these was that of Simonis, Halle, 1752, reprinted 1822, 1828. Without going into unnecessary criticism, it may be stated that this text faithfully represents the text as it was known at the commencement of the Christian era. "From the second century onwards the consonantal text (for vowel pointing had not then been invented) was regarded as sacred; the world might stand or fall by the omission or insertion of a letter in the Law. The result is that the consonantal text of the second century is precisely the consonantal text of the present day." And the Jews took special precautions that no one should alter the text by either addition or omission. Not only did they count up all the Hebrew words of the Pentateuch, which they had made to total 79,856, but they went so far as to count all the letters, though in this latter case authorities differ, for the letters have been variously computed from 350,000 to 600,000, and the other books of the Bible have been similarly dealt with. As if this precaution in itself were not sufficient, the scribes went further to note the middle verses of the different books—Pentateuch; Lev. viii. 7; Joshua xiii. 26; Judges x. 8; 1 Sam. xxviii. 24 (the two books severally of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were read as one book, so were Ezra and Nehemiah); 1 Kings xxii. 6; Isa. xxxiii. 21, etc., whilst the middle verse of the complete Old Testament, according to the Jewish order of the Canon, was stated to be Jer. vi. 7.

According to our way of thinking, the order that is given to the books of the Bible is one of importance, and no doubt many have been surprised to notice such prophets as Haggai and Zechariah at the end of the Old Testament referring to the rebuilding of the Temple described so long before as in Ezra and Nehemiah, which are placed in our English Bible before either Job or the Psalms. It must, however, be always borne in mind that there is no attempt at chronological order in the books of either the Old or the New Testament, and the Jew never troubled his head about the order of books any more than people to-day would trouble what order they placed Scott, Dickens, and Rider Haggard on the shelves of their library. Till the third century of the Christian era each book of the Old Testament was given in Hebrew a separate roll to itself, and each being treated as a separate book no special attention was paid to the order in which they were placed. Our practice of reckoning two books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles started with the Greek translation, and the reason why the Greek translators divided these books into two parts was because the whole made up a volume that was too bulky to handle with ease.

In modern editions of the Hebrew Bible the Old Testament is divided into three great divisions, called the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, and the different books are given in the following order :—

I. The Law.

Genesis.
Exodus.
Leviticus.
Numbers.
Deuteronomy.

Total 5 books.

II. The Prophets which are divided into two subdivisions called the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets.

(1) The Former Prophets.

Joshua.
Judges.
Samuel (1st and 2nd books).
Kings (1st and 2nd books)

4 books.

(2) The Latter Prophets.

Isaiah.
Jeremiah.
Ezekiel.
Hosea.
Joel.
Amos.
Obadiah
Jonah.
Micah.
Nahum.
Habakkuk.
Zephaniah.
Haggai.
Zechariah.
Malachi.

These twelve Minor Prophets are reckoned as one book.

4 books.

III. The Psalms.
Psalms.
Proverbs.
Job.
Song of Solomon.
Ruth.
Lamentations.
Ecclesiastes.
Esther.
Daniel.
Ezra and Nehemiah.
Chronicles (1st and 2nd books).
11 books.
Total 24 books.

The Jews are stated to have purposely arranged the contents of the Old Testament so that they might fall into sufficient divisions as would correspond with the number of letters in their alphabet. There are, however, only twenty-two letters in their alphabet, and in order to reduce the number to the desired total Ruth and Lamentations were taken, not as separate books, but as if they were appendices to Judges and Jeremiah respectively.

CHAPTER VIII

HEBREW POETRY

HEBREW poetry is far too grand a subject to think of doing it justice in a work of this size, and yet it would be impossible to deal with the romance of the Hebrew language without some allusion to the forms and methods in which that romance takes its highest flight.

At the beginning we said that every word was once a poem, and now we may follow that up with another statement that to Jewish eyes everything in the world around him was full of its own romance, and voiced a message from the Unseen Being Who made all things. The poets drew their inspiration from the mountains and rivers of Palestine, the clouds that fled across their sky, and in the glad moments when their souls were entranced to gaze on "the mystic heaven and earth within," it seemed that all creation was full of song, ceaselessly offering its Benedicite of praise to the Almighty. Like Shakespeare's Duke in *As you like it*, they loved to—

> "Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

"Their images and metaphors," writes Munk in *Palestine*, p. 444, "are taken chiefly from nature and the phenomena of Palestine and the surrounding countries, from the pastoral life, from agriculture and the national history. The stars of heaven, the sand of the seashore are the images of a vast multitude. Would they speak of a mighty host of enemies invading the country, they are the swift torrents or the roaring waves of the sea, or the clouds that bring on a tempest; the war-chariots advance swiftly like lightning or the whirlwinds. Happiness rises as the dawn and shines like the daylight; the blessing of God descends like the dew or the bountiful rain: the anger of Heaven is a devouring fire that annihilates the wicked as the flame which devours the stubble. Unhappiness is likened to days of clouds and darkness; at times of great catastrophes the sun sets in broad day, the heavens are shaken, the earth trembles, the stars disappear, the sun is changed into darkness, and the moon into blood. The cedars of Lebanon, the oaks of Bashan are the image of the mighty man, the palm and the reed of the great and the humble, briers and thorns of the wicked; the pious man is an olive evergreen, or a tree planted by the waterside. The animal kingdom furnished equally a large number of images: the lion is the image of power, whilst the wolf, bear, etc., typify tyrants, violent and rapacious men; and the pious man who suffers is like a feeble sheep led to the slaughter. The strong and powerful man is compared to the he-goat, or the bull of Bashan: the kine of Bashan figure, in the discourses of Amos, as the image of rich and voluptuous women; the people who rebel against the Divine Will are a refractory heifer. Other images are borrowed from the country life and from the life domestic and social: the chastisement of God weighs upon Israel like a wagon laden with

sheaves; the dead cover the earth as the dung which covers the surface of the fields, whilst the bleached bones of a host slain in battle, and left by the vultures are like the chips left in a copse when the trees have been cut down and carted away. The impious man sows crime and reaps misery, or he sows the wind and reaps the tempest. The people overwhelmed by their enemies are like the corn crushed beneath the threshing instrument. God tramples the wine in the wine-press when He chastens the impious and sheds their blood. The wrath of the Lord is often represented as an intoxicating cup which He causes those to empty who have merited His chastisement: terrors and anguish are often compared to the pangs of child-birth. Peoples, towns, and states are represented by the Hebrew poets under the image of daughters or wives: in their impiety or apostacy they are courtesans or adulteresses. The historical allusions of most frequent occurrence are taken from the catastrophe of Sodom and Gomorrah, the miracles of the departure from Egypt, and the appearance of the Lord on Mount Sinai. Examples might easily be multiplied in illustration of these remarkable characteristics of the Hebrew poets: they abound upon every page of their writings, and in striking contrast with the vague generalisations of Indian philosophic poetry, are clothed in a style that is entirely different from that of other Eastern races. The wording and imagery of the Persian poets is refined, that of the Arabians subtle and discriminating, whilst that of the Hebrews is simple and child-like, going back to an earlier period of the human race than any other."

In all conditions of life the song or the chant was heard—at the wedding (Jer. vii. 34; xxv. 10; Ps. xlv.) lovers broke into song (Isa. v. 1, 2; Ezek.

xxxiii. 22). The people sang in the harvest-fields (Ps. lxv. 13), at the wine-press (Isa. xvi. 10; Jer. xxv. 30), at the discovery of water (Num. xxi. 17, etc.), and at the feast (Isa. v. 12; Ps. lxix. 12). Occasionally at the feast the host improvised the song (Amos vi. 5) or the riddle (Judges xiv. 12), but usually the singers were hired to entertain the guests (2 Sam. xix. 35; 1 Kings x. 12, and compare David's position at Saul's court). Warriors called to each other in rhythmic chants (1 Sam. xviii. 7; xxi. 11; xxix. 5; Judges v. 29). On his return the conqueror either himself sang his exploits (Gen. iv. 23; Judges xv. 16) or employed a poet, whose songs, like that of Deborah, were afterwards recorded for all time (cf. Num. xxi. 14, 27; Joshua x. 12–13; Judges v. 11). Satire, too, was clothed in poetry (Judges v. 15–17; Hab. ii. 6, etc.; Jer. vii. 29; Ezek. xix. 1; xxvi. 17). Proverbs and parables were given in poetic measure (Judges ix. 7, etc.; 2 Kings xiv. 9, etc.; 2 Sam. xii. 1, etc.; xiv. 6, etc.). Death also called forth its own particular form of poetry, the "Lament" sung by trained mourning women (Jer. ix. 17, etc.; Amos v. 16) no doubt taking a stereotyped form.

As regards the structure of Hebrew poetry, the Revisers have done a good work by printing the poetry of the Old Testament wherever it occurs in parallel lines instead of in complete verses as found in the Authorised Version. Every beginner might be expected to know he was reading poetry when he reads such a book as the Psalms, or such passages

as the Song of the Red Sea in Ex. xv., or Balaam's Parable in Num. xxiii. Even in such obvious examples of poetry as these it trains the eye to perceive the structure of thought by reading the thought in parallel lines, and in examples that are less obvious, such as the Song of the Sword (Gen. iv. 23, 24), or the Song to the Well in Num. xxi. 17, 18, the advantage is still greater.

Now, it is a curious fact that Hebrew poetry has never been understood until comparatively recent times. There were plenty of scholars capable of grasping the subject, plenty who devoted no small part of their lives to the study of Hebrew, but none of them seemed able to get hold of the proper clue. They could not get rid of the prejudices which Greek and Latin poetry had fostered in their minds, or take into calculation that Hebrew is written from right to left, and not from left to right, like other languages to which they were accustomed. All scholars at the various Universities of Europe were so versed in Homer's and Virgil's praises of heathen gods and goddesses, and so loved the regular metre in which those praises were sung, they had neither the eyes nor the patience to perceive poetry that was not similarly expressed. Poetry, if it was anything worthy of the name, must fall in with the style of the classics, and conform to the rules for it drawn up by the great master minds of Greece or Italy. The idea of giving Hebrew poetry a place of its own in the literature of the world never seems to have occurred to them; still less did they think that,

given this independent footing of its own, Hebrew poetry might equal, if it did not surpass, any that the world has ever seen. They were something like people in the present day who compare S. Paul's Cathedral with Westminster Abbey, and fail to see the glory of S. Paul's massive grandeur because it is not like the style of Westminster. Their chief pride is that each is absolutely distinct from the other, and so far from inviting comparison they absolutely deny it; each stands as a masterpiece in its own style, and as soon as comparison begins the source of their marvel departs. The result is the same when comparison is made between Hebrew and classical poetry, and not only was this comparison made, but writers, both Jewish and Christian, attempted to show that the Jews excelled the Greeks and Romans on their own ground; in fact, they said the excellency of Greek and Latin metre in Homer and Virgil was copied from Hebrew minds. So we read of Josephus trying to make out that the Song of Moses at the Red Sea was composed in the hexametre measure, whilst Eusebius declared that the 119th Psalm was written in what Greeks called the heroic metre, that is, in hexametres of sixteen syllables, and Jerome tried to find a likeness between the Psalter, Lamentations, and the songs of Scripture and the Odes of Horace, Pindar, Alcaeus, and Sappho.

It was the same old story, which cannot be too often repeated, though it sounds monotonous, people could not get into their heads that Hebrew is written

from right to left ; they must needs deal with it in just the same way as languages they were accustomed to written in the opposite direction, and thus the genius and distinctive glory of the Hebrew speech was ignored from the very beginning.

By printing the Psalms and poetical books of Scripture in parallel lines the Revisers have done an excellent work. It trains the eye to perceive the system on which all Hebrew poetry is based, and that is on parallelism of thought, whether that parallelism be one of contrast or further explanation. It has nothing whatever to do with the length of vowels or number of words like Greek and Latin metre ; still less does it concern itself with any similarity of sound at the end of each line like rhymes in English poetry. These are only artificial methods of sound that appeal to the ear, but the Jew went further, and appealed to the mind behind the ear ; because he was a poet he came forth as a poet to make men think, and create ideas which had not been expressed before. More, too, than that : if the thought was to obtain effectual entrance into the mind, it must do so naturally, that is, according to the method of nature which men saw and noticed in the world around them every day they lived. Like the animals that went into the ark two by two, so the thoughts which fix on the human mind are those that go in by comparison, contrast, or explanation with other thoughts. In some cases the thought needed to be wedded to another before it could prove fertile ; in other cases it needed some

foil or contrast for its beauty to be displayed, and at other times it needed further explanation or amplification, as if one stroke of the hammer was not sufficient to drive in the nail.

"Action and re-action," writes Emerson in his *Essay on Compensation*, "we meet in every part of nature; in darkness and light; in heat and in cold; in the ebb and flow of waters; in the inspiration and expiration of plants and animals; in the systole and diastole of the heart; in centrifugal and centripetal gravity, etc., etc. . . . An inevitable dualism bisects nature, so that each thing is a half, and suggests another to make it whole; as spirit, matter; man, woman; odd, even; subjective, objective; in, out; upper, under; motion, rest; yea, nay."

Now, it was this "inevitable dualism bisecting nature" on which the Hebrew poet based his work, and Bishop Lowth, in his standard work on the subject, shows how the Jew worked out his system by three kinds of parallelism which he calls synonymous, antithetical, and synthetic.

The simplest form is synonymous parallelism, in which the second part of the line or verse repeats in different language the sense of the first. Take a few examples for illustration :—

Ps. ii. 4. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh :
The Lord shall have them in derision."

Job vi. 8. "Oh that I might have my request :
And that God would grant me the thing,
that I long for!"

Isa. v. 7. "And He looked for judgment, but beheld
oppression:
For righteousness, but behold a cry."

In this last case, besides the parallelism of thought, there is also in the Hebrew a play upon the words, called paranomasia, which hardly stands translation:

"And He looked for reason, but behold
treason:
For right, but behold fright."

Ps. xxi. 1, 2. "The king shall joy in Thy strength, O
Lord:
And in Thy Salvation how greatly shall
he rejoice.
Thou hast given him his heart's desire:
And hast not withholden the request of
his lips."

Isa. li. 8. "For the moth shall eat up like a garment
And the worm shall eat them like wool:
But My righteousness shall be for ever,
And My salvation from generation to
generation."

Another form of Hebrew poetry is called by Bishop Lowth antithetical parallelism, in which the sense of the two members of a verse is opposed, or that said in the second half is in contrast with that of the first.

Ps. xviii. 27. "For Thou wilt save the afflicted people:
But wilt bring down high looks."

Prov. xi. 1. "A false balance is abomination to the
Lord:
But a just weight is His delight."

Ps. xxx. 5. "For His anger endureth but a moment,
In His favour is life:
Weeping may endure for a night,
But joy cometh in the morning."

Prov. xv. 20. "A wise son maketh a glad father:
But a foolish man despiseth his mother."

The need of clear enunciation when giving out a text from the pulpit is exemplified by an instance which came before the writer's notice. A servant went to church one evening, and on her return the mistress asked what the text of the sermon had been. The text had been the one just quoted, but according to the girl's version it was made to run—

"A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish man is just like his mother."

Besides these two varieties, Bishop Lowth names a third, which is called the synthetic or constructive, in which the members of a verse are written without being either parallel or synthetic, but continuing the construction or meaning of the passage. Thus—

Ps. iii. 2. "Many there be which say of my soul:
There is no help for him in God."

Ps. xi. 3. "If the foundations be destroyed:
What can the righteous do?"

Isa. l. 5, 6. "The Lord hath opened mine ear,
And I was not rebellious,
Neither turned away back.
I gave my back to the smiters,
And my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair:
I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

In this kind of parallelism an idea is neither repeated nor followed by its opposite, but is kept in view by the writer, while he proceeds to develop and enforce its meaning by accessory ideas and modifications.

To these three kinds of parallelism given by Bishop Lowth a fourth is added by Dr. Jebb, and called by him introverted parallelism.

According to this last kind he explains, "There are stanzas so constructed that, whatever be the number of lines, the first line shall be parallel with the last; the second with the last but one; and so throughout in an order that looks inward, or is introverted. Thus—

Prov. xxiii. 15, 16. "My son, if thine heart be wise,
My heart shall rejoice, even mine.
Yea, my reins shall rejoice,
When thy lips speak right things."

Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2. "Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens:
Behold as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters,
And as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress:
So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us."

Another curious feature in the romance of the Hebrew language as found in the Bible is what we may call the Jewish Acrostics or Alphabetical Psalms, where each verse is made to begin with

the different letters of the alphabet in regular order. Instances of this kind are to be found in Ps. ix. and x., xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., cxlv.; Lam. i.–iv.; Prov. xxxi. 10, etc. The most conspicuous example is the 119th Psalm. It consists of 176 verses, divided into twenty-two portions of eight verses each, and all eight verses in each portion begin with the same letter. Thus the initial letter in each of the first eight verses is A, in the second portion the initial of each verse is B, that of the third G, corresponding with our C, and so on to the end of the alphabet.

The Revised Version, we stated above, has done a great work for English readers by printing the poetical passages of Scripture in parallel lines instead of complete verses; but the reader must bear in mind that there are many poetical passages which have not been so treated. Take, for example, Isa. ii. 12–17, a passage which the Revisers have printed, and most people read as if it were so much prose, and yet in thought and imagery it is as highly poetical as any of the Psalms, so much so that its meaning is absolutely lost unless the poetical metaphors which it contains are rightly understood. The cedars and oaks of Bashan are kings and potentates of the highest rank, sheltering many people beneath their widespread boughs. The high mountains and lofty hills are the great kingdoms and cities of the world which men suppose to be immovable, so powerful that they shall never be cast down. The high towers and fenced walls are

the defenders and protectors on whom men pin their faith for safety and deliverance from their foes. The ships of Tarshish and pleasant pictures refer to merchants enriched by commerce, the millionaires of the day abounding in all the luxuries of life.

Translate, therefore, this highly poetical passage with its metaphors rightly understood, and the prophet's warning must have sounded to the men of his day like some mighty peal of thunder that spoke of a terrible storm to follow sweeping all before it. Thus—

"The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low:
And upon all the kings that are high and lifted, and upon all the potentates of highest rank,
And upon all the grand kingdoms that have never been shaken, and upon all the cities of the world which men deem immovable,
And upon every defender whose name is upon all men's lips, and upon every protector to whom they pin their faith for safety.
And upon all the merchant princes enriched by commerce, and upon all the millionaires who abound in the luxuries of life,
And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

And not only do parts of Scripture treated as prose abound in passages highly poetical as the above, but what makes the reading even more

delightful is the depth of thought suggested to the mind by each metaphor that is used. Indeed, one of the first purposes served by reading the Bible in the original is that it teaches men how to think, and not only what to think; it teaches men how to express their thoughts by clothing them in some analogy of nature which may be read and understood of men of all tongues and languages so long as this world shall last.

Take, for instance, such an example as Ps. cxviii. 12, "They (the Psalmist's enemies) are quenched as the fire of thorns." There is neither speech nor language but where the meaning of such a metaphor can fail to be heard among them. The picture of that conquest has been photographed for all time in colours that can never fade, for they are the colours of nature such as repeat themselves in every land. It is the picture of a host with fire, as it were, flashing from their brightly polished armour, but down they all go as a fire of thorns flares up bright and raging, and then as quickly subsides.

Compare Homer's *Iliad*, ii. 455, etc., as translated by Pope—

> "As on some mountain, through the lofty grove,
> The crackling flames ascend and blaze above,
> The fires expanding, as the winds arise,
> Shoot their long beams, and kindle half the skies:
> So, from the polished arms, and brazen shields,
> A gleamy splendour flashed along the fields."

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and those who have passed through the Vale

of Tears can feel the sorrow that had pierced the Psalmist's heart when he wrote (Ps. lxxxviii. 18), "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness"; or, as that last clause may be literally translated, "mine acquaintance (*i.e.* mine experience, as I go over the days that have passed) is darkness." As we would say, there is none left to call him by his Christian name, he has outlived his generation, gone are all the friends of his youth, and silent the voices which he recalls in past years. An eminent Persian poet named Khosrov has delicately touched on that Darkness from whence no traveller returns to tell us where they are—

"Weeping, I passed the place where lay my friends
Captured by death; in accents wild I cried,
Where are they? And stern Fate, by Echo's voice,
Returned in solemn sound the sad, Where are they?"

From such a sad wail as that we turn with relief to the beautiful translation which Dr. Samuel Davidson gives of Wisdom iv. 7–14, and calls—

THE DEATH OF RIGHTEOUS YOUTH.

"But if the righteous die sooner than usual,
He shall be in rest.
For honourable age is not length of time,
Nor is it measured by number of years,
But wisdom is the grey hair unto men,
And an unspotted life is number of years.
Whereas he pleased God, he was loved by Him,

And because he lived among sinners, he was translated.
He was hurried away, lest wickedness should change his understanding,
Or deceit beguile his soul.
For the envious sorcery of naughtiness darkens beautiful things,
And the giddiness of lust perverts the innocent mind.
Soon perfected he fulfilled a long time,
For his soul was well pleasing to the Lord;
Therefore it hasted away from the midst of wickedness."

Scripture voices the sad and despairing cries of the human heart as when that Psalmist cried, "my experience is darkness," but it always supplies the balm with which to heal the wound when we know where it may be found. If we find in one Psalm the blank negative and cruel silence which frustrates our fondest thoughts and wishes, then we also find in another Psalm the hope which shines immortal in the human breast, the faith that pierces through the darkness to discover the grand aim and lasting issues of this mortal life. In contrast, then, with the piteous wail of Ps. lxxxviii. 18, turn to the wonderful thought and glorious expectation implied by the Hebrew of Ps. cxxxix. 15: "My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." The Hebrew for "curiously wrought," ruq-qam-tî, means embroidered, made of needlework, and beautifully describes the exquisite workmanship of the

human body, and the final service in God's great sanctuary for which this perfect work was made, not for silence as some take death to mean, but for glad outburst of praise, not for darkness, but for that bright and everlasting Light—

> "Where no cloud nor passing vapour
> Dims the brightness of the air:
> Endless noonday, glorious noonday,
> From the Sun of suns is there;
> There no night brings rest from labour,
> For unknown are toil and care."

Lest any think that the inference drawn is more than the original implies, the writer quotes the remarks made on this passage by Bishop Lowth.

"In that most perfect hymn, where the immensity of the omnipresent Deity, and the admirable wisdom of the Divine Artificer in framing the human body are celebrated, the poet uses a remarkable metaphor, drawn from the nicest tapestry work:

"'When I was formed in secret;

"'When I was wrought, as with a needle, in the lowest parts of the earth.' He who remarks this (but the man who consults Versions only will hardly remark it), and at the same time reflects upon the wonderful composition of the human body, the various implication of veins, arteries, fibres, membranes, and 'the inexplicable texture' of the whole frame, will immediately understand the beauty and elegance of this most apt translation. But he will not attain the whole force and dignity, unless he also considers that the most artful embroidery with the needle was dedicated by the

Hebrews to the service of the Sanctuary, and the highest use of such embroidery was to be applied to a certain part of the High Priest's dress, see Ex. xxviii. 39."

Such is the faith that penetrates the darkness of the grave, a faith that proclaims the loss of friends to mean a translation from us to some further existence of nobler enterprise and wider ministry; a faith that shines bright before the faithful servant when called to pass through the Valley of Shadows and Dim Foreboding. He knows that the call is from One Who has not made all men for nothing, but has curiously wrought him in the lowest parts of the earth that he may be gathered as one slender thread, one tiny part of the design in the embroidery of the Redeemer's Robe when he comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

CHAPTER IX

SYMBOLISM

In a small book called *The Genius of Judaism* Isaac Disraeli shows how grossly and persistently the Jewish people have been misunderstood by the other nations of the world. He goes back to the days when they lived together in a land of their own, when there was every opportunity of getting to know and understand them as a collective whole, and shows how scant was the justice they received from their contemporaries.

"The ancient polytheists," he writes, "had no real knowledge of the Jews. The Egyptians were known to the Greeks through their maritime intercourse, but the Hebrews, from their inland locality, were shut out from the world. Aristotle classes the Jews among the Brahmins of India, probably from their isolation among all other nations. Plutarch accuses the Jews of worshipping the hog, having observed them rigidly abstain from that animal as food. Among the Romans they were censured as a people without religion, deniers as they were of a plurality of deities. Florinus writes of them *impia gens*. Justin, Strabo, and Appian equally betray the same ignorance of this people, and fall into the same popular misconceptions. . . . Tacitus

classes the Jews among the worshippers of Bacchus from the circumstance that Pompey had found a golden vine among the ornaments of the Temple, and the Feast of Tabernacles happening at the same time as the celebration of the orgies connected with Bacchus ! "

Seeing the mistakes of others should open our eyes to see our own : seeing how the Jewish nation has been misunderstood and grossly misrepresented by such brilliant intellects as Aristotle among the Greeks and Tacitus among the Romans, at all events prepares the mind to see how the Old Testament revelation may have been misunderstood amongst us because we have failed to catch the spirit and genius of the Hebrew language. We are always inclined to deal with Scripture from an English and twentieth century point of view, whereas the first thing necessary is to get away from our own standpoint, and to gain the standpoint of time, place, and manner of thinking where the words were spoken or written. There is, so to express it, a grammar of the Bible which must be mastered by those who would arrive at the true sense of the Bible, and that grammar is not the stereotyped rule of the scholar or grammarian, but rather that drawn up by the Creator, the grammar of nature. " The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead " (Rom. i. 20). The word-for-word translation, which is due to a mistaken reverence for the *ipsissima verba* of Scripture, must inevitably

mislead those who make no allowance for Jewish thought and peculiarities. In nearly all works on the History and Evolution of Language, for example, Gen. xi. 1 is quoted as if it was to be taken literally, supplying the earliest information from which the writer proceeds to build up his theory. "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." It would, however, seriously upset all such calculations if the text was read with symbolical meaning and as implying that the various peoples of that day did not speak the same language, but agreed in one purpose and lived together in peace and friendship. That the text can have such a meaning may be proved by referring to such parallel passages as Joshua ix. 2 and 1 Kings xxii. 13. In its own day the Jewish shekel was perfectly good; no doubt it was made of quite as good silver as our own half-crown, but before it can be put into circulation it must needs be melted down and receive a new impress from the land where it is to be used. And so with Old Testament texts, they are Jewish, not English, productions, and before they can serve their purpose amongst the English allowance must be made for the strangeness of superscription they carry upon them. As a nation we are not poetical. The Jew was never anything but poetical; he hardly ever opened his mouth without using metaphor, and the scholar who spends all his time in trying to arrive at the *ipsissima verba* without making allowance for the poetical meaning of the words is doing much the same thing as one who

treasures up the shell of a nut and throws away the kernel.

Let Scripture first speak for itself by supplying us with examples to show how the Jewish mind relied on symbolism for the fitting expression of thought. Jeremiah (i. 11) beheld an almond tree as a token of the speedy fulfilment of the word of God, and Amos (viii. 1) saw a basket of summer fruit as a symbol of the approaching end of Israel. Ahijah the Shilonite (1 Kings xi. 30) tore Jeroboam's mantle into twelve pieces to signify the division of the kingdom of Israel, and Zedekiah (1 Kings xxii. 11) made horns of iron to encourage Ahab to engage in war with Ramoth-Gilead. King Joash, at the command of the prophet Elisha (2 Kings xiii. 15–19), shot arrows from the open window into the air to symbolise the destruction of his enemies. Isaiah (xx. 2) walked naked and barefoot to show how the people would be treated when taken captive by the Assyrians; while Jeremiah (xxvii. 2–4, 10–12) wore a yoke upon his neck to induce the nations to submit to the King of Assyria; and Ezekiel (xxxvii. 15, etc.) was commanded to inscribe the names of certain tribes upon separate pieces of wood to show that God would re-unite those tribes (see also Isa. vi.; Ezek. i.; Dan. vii.).

"The Lord of heaven and earth" is one of the most usual titles by which the Jew distinguished the God he believed in from the deities of other nations, and we see that title appearing in almost all a Jew said or wrote: the Hand that wrote the Bible was to him the Hand that made the world;

one was as truly inspired and displayed the Mind of his God as the other. It was not merely that one was like the other, but each was a part of one whole, and that whole the manifestation of God to man. The whole Bible was one continued remonstrance against putting asunder the two whom God had joined together. Earth was not the opposite to heaven; one was the beginning and the other its completion, and the mysteries of heaven were made plain through the common and everyday working of nature. To speak spiritually the Jew had to speak naturally, and devotion had to express itself by symbolism. "Nothing on earth," says the Talmud, "is so small or insignificant but what it has its counterpart in heaven." The entire moral and visible world from first to last, with its kings and its subjects, its parents and its children, its sun and moon, its sowing and harvest, its light and its darkness, its sleeping and its waking, its birth and its death, is from beginning to end a mighty parable, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual signification. It is therefore in symbolism that the romance of the Hebrew language finds its chief vent, and a perusal of the following list, in which every word has symbolical meaning, will show the reader how much might be said on the subject.

Abyss. Air. Altar. Arm. Arrow. Ashes. Axe. Babylon. Balance. Bear. Bee. Behind. Birds. Bitter. Black. Blood. Book. Bow. Branch. Brass. Breast. Breast-plate. Bull. Burial. Burn.

Calf. Candlestick. Carcase. Cedar. Chain. Chariot. Cherubim. Clothed. Cloud. Colour. Column. Crown. Cup.

Darkness. Day. Death. Dew. Door. Dove. Drunk. Dust.

Eagle. Earth. Earthquake. Eat. Egypt. Eyes.

Face. Fat. Feet. Fire. First-born. Fishes. Forehead. Forest. Fountain. Four. Fox. Furnace.

Garden. Garments. Gates. Girdle. Glass. Goats. Gold. Grapes. Grass.

Hail. Hair. Harp. Harvest. Head. Heat. Heaven. Horn. Horse. Host. Hunger. Hyssop.

Incense. Iron. Island.

Key. Kill. King.

Lamb. Leaves. Leopard. Light. Lightnings. Lion. Locust.

Manna. Marriage. Measure. Milk. Moon. Mother. Mountain. Mouth. Myrtle.

Name. Night.

Oak. Oil. Olive-tree. Ox.

Palm. Paradise. Pearl. Pomegranates.

Rain. Rainbow. Ram. Reed. Rest. Resurrection. Right-hand. River. Robe. Rod. Root.

Sacrifice. Salt. Sand. Scorpion. Sea. Sealing. See. Sepulchre. Serpent. Seven. Shadow. Sheep. Shepherd. Shield. Ships. Sickle. Silence. Sleep. Smoke. Snow. Song. Sores. Star. Stones. Stork. Sun. Sword.

Tail. Tears. Temple. Thigh. Three. Threshing. Thunder. Time. Torch. Tower. Tree. Trumpet. Twelve. Two.

Vail. Valley. Vine. Voice.

Wall. Watchman. Water. Wind. Wine. Wine-press. Wing. Within and Without.

Let us now take a few examples from this list to show how full and varied is the meaning which each of those words can be made to convey.

Cloud

Unless qualified by some other word, cloud in Scripture always denotes what is good and implies success. It is in general the symbol of protection (like the pillar of cloud which guarded the Israelites in the wilderness: Ex. xiii. 21, 22), because it preserves from the scorching heat of the sun, which in its turn was symbolical of anguish and persecution, and because it also distils a rain or cool and benign influence (Num. xiv. 9). Moses tells the Children of Israel not to fear the people of the land, for "their defence (tsillam) is departed from them." The word for "defence" (tsel) means literally shadow, or protection spread over them, the favour of their tutelary deity. The Arabs have a similar expression, using the same word, zull, "May God extend thy shadow eternally!" This explains the old Irish saying, "May your shadow never grow less," not meaning, as most take it, "May your height or power never decrease," but "May the good God never fail to protect and preserve you." In the 14th verse of this chapter Moses goes on to speak of the pillar of cloud which guided and guarded the pilgrims in the wilderness, "Thy cloud standeth over them . . . by day time in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night."

Isa. lx. 8. "Who are these that fly as a cloud,
And as the doves to their windows?"

On this verse Erasmus has a curious comment, bringing out the symbolism of the language, "The clouds fly aloft that they may moisten and render fruitful the earth below. Even as the Ministers of the Gospel raised far above earthly desires and bordering upon heaven, replenish the grovelling and sterile minds of men with the rain of the heavenly word that they may bring forth fruit worthy of God. They fly like clouds, everywhere diffusing the grace of the Gospel, but they fly too like doves to their windows, for they make not their nest in the ground, but in the hollow of some lofty rock, that by their continual sighs and prayers they may excite the grovelling mind to a love of the heavenly life."

The sudden disappearance of threatening clouds from the sky is beautifully employed as a figure for the blotting out of transgressions in Isa. xliv. 22, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee."

Cup

This is a word of varied symbolism. In Jer. li. 7 Babylon is called "a golden cup in the Lord's Hand," *i.e.* she was a splendid instrument of vengeance ordained by God against the neighbouring nations.

Ps. lxxv. 8. Wine mixed with bitter ingredients

was usually given to malefactors when they were going to be put to death, and in Isa. li. 17 Jerusalem is represented as staggering under it.

The image of a cup as a portion (*e.g.* Ps. xxiii. 5) seems to have been borrowed from the ancient custom when the master of a feast would allot to each of his guests the kind and the quantity of drink which he should receive. Jer. xvi. 7 we read of "the cup of consolation" in allusion to the funeral custom of the Jews of sending provisions to the house of the deceased, and healths were drunk to the survivors of the family, hoping that the dead had been the victim for the sins of the family.

Dew

During the months of May, June, July, and August not a single cloud is to be seen in Palestine, but during the night the earth is moistened by a copious dew, which is frequently made a symbol of Divine Goodness, *e.g.* Hosea xiv. 5, "I will be as the dew unto Israel."

Dew, as consisting of innumerable drops (cf. Ps. lxxii. 6), is sometimes taken as the symbol of multitude, and in this sense it sheds a wonderful light on the much-disputed text which occurs in Ps. cx. 3, P.B.V., "The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning," or, as it may be translated, "More than the dew from the womb of the morning shall be the dew of thy progeny," meaning that converts to the Gospel shall be very numerous, or

at the Morn of Resurrection the saved shall be as the drops of dew for multitude, each sparkling with the brightness of the Sun, when the Lord "shall come to be glorified in His saints" (2 Thess. i. 10).

Gold, Silver, and Brass

Gold was the symbol of the Divine or Heavenly Light, the glory of God (Zech. vi. 11, etc.), and silver the emblem of moral innocence and of holiness (Isa. i. 22; Jer. vi. 30), while brass typified hardness, strength, and firmness (Lev. xxvi. 19; Jer. xv. 12; Job xl. 18).

Golden Candlestick

This lamp-stand, as the word might be translated, was made of solid gold, a talent in weight, and was therefore one of the costliest articles in the Temple. Better, however, than its cost was the symbolism which it conveyed, for it meant perpetual light, the whole year round, in the Sanctuary. Josephus says that in the second Temple it was always alight, day as well as night, but in the first Temple it seems to have been only in use during the hours of darkness. See Ex. xxvii. 21; xxx. 7, 8; Lev. xxiv. 3, and 1 Sam. iii. 3. As the light took the place of the sun it beautifully symbolised that the Church on earth was meant as a witness to the Lord God Who was the Sun of Israel, that it lived upon the Holy Spirit as the candlestick lived on the oil which fed the flame. Natural lights might fail,

and natural joys or consolations might pass away when the pilgrim's path was darkened by angry clouds, but even in the greatest darkness and deepest woe there was a light which never went out, and never ceased to bear its message to those who feared the Lord. "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. cxxi. 4). More, too, than perpetual watchfulness whilst others slept, the Golden Candlestick reminded the worshipper as he approached of the penetrating knowledge of the Deity unto Whom all hearts were open, and from Whom no secrets could be hid. "Yea, the darkness (of my secret thoughts) is no darkness with Thee, but the night is as clear as the day: the darkness (of inward thought) and the light (of outward profession) to Thee are both alike (Ps. cxxxix. 11).

Key

Isa. xxii. 22. "I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder," for the key was a symbol of government, of authority and power. It is said that authority to explain the Law and the Prophets used to be given among the Jews by the delivery of a key, in the same way that in our Ordination Service a Bible is handed by the bishop to the priest, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the holy sacraments to the congregation where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto." If this custom of the key was once in vogue among the Jews it helps to explain

our Lord's commission to S. Peter. S. Matt. xvi. 19, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Manna

In S. John vi. 51 our Lord applies this type to Himself, "I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven." He was given to feed the pilgrims through this wilderness towards the Promised Land. Going back to the history of the type, it is not hard to see how wonderfully descriptive the type was of the coming Saviour.

(1) Manna was given to the Israelites by reason of urgent necessity; there was no other resource to be found. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

(2) Manna was the gift of God, direct from His Hand, and Christ is the free Gift of Divine Love (S. John iii. 16).

(3) Manna was plentiful as well as free, and the whole fulness of the Godhead is in Jesus Christ. There is enough for all, and none need go away unsatisfied. "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack" (Ex. xvi. 18).

(4) Falling round about the camp it was within

reach of all; if any man starved it was in sight of bread! And "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3).

(5) The supply came daily, sufficient for the need of the coming hours, and we are taught to pray "Give us this day our daily bread" (S. Matt. vi. 11). As the Israelites could not lay up for future use, neither can we lay up grace beyond immediate need.

(6) The manna had to be gathered in the morning, not when it suited convenience, but at the stated time, and on the sixth day sufficient had to be brought in to last over the Sabbath. In other words, to get their food the people had to show obedience; they were not to do just as they liked, or when they liked. And in the same way God has appointed means of grace to prove obedience as well as to test our faith.

Name

The names in Scripture open out such a wide and interesting field of thought it would be impossible to do the subject justice without devoting a chapter, or rather a whole book, to it alone, and yet it would be impossible to deal with the romance of the Hebrew language without making some allusion to it. Instances will readily occur to the mind showing that amongst the Hebrew people names were very much more than the labels they are amongst us to distinguish one person from

another. Sometimes they were given to record a special event which took place at the birth of a child, as Isaac, Jacob, Ichabod; at other times they were intended to signify the character of the individual, as Naomi, Solomon, Immanuel. Because the name was recognised in this way to carry a special significance with it the custom arose of changing the name on any important change of condition, as was done in the cases of Abram, Sarai, Jacob, Joseph, and Daniel. And few things more closely exhibit the importance attached to baptism by the early Christians than the fact that they often took a new name at their baptism, as many in later times have done at their Confirmation. For a custom rightly understood is the faith of the people written in the language of the people. In English we speak of "men of renown," *i.e. renominati*, twice named, or, as the word implies, having one name which they derived from their fathers, and another which they acquired by fame or daring. To be called by the name of any one is in Scripture equivalent to saying that he belonged to the person whose name he took. Slaves were branded on the forehead with the name of their master, and the bride at marriage took the name of her husband. When God placed the beasts of the field in subjection to man as their lawful owner and master, He is said (Gen. ii. 19) to have "brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof."

The New Testament, we must always remember,

is Hebrew thought clothed in Greek wording, and when we read (S. Matt. xxviii. 19) of our Lord telling His disciples to go "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," He implied a great deal more than a mere Baptismal Service of twenty minutes' duration. Beginning with or leading up to that service there was to be a lifelong work of instruction and spiritual discipline, bringing each candidate into the Family of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and never resting satisfied till the candidate at last confessed himself as belonging to the Holy Trinity in the same way that a slave belonged to his master. Indiscriminate baptism, treating the sacred rite as if it was some magical charm to be performed at all cost, whether Christian training follows or not, is more repugnant to the mind of Scripture than even the awful alternative of leaving a child unbaptized.

Pomegranates

This fruit, ripening in October, is as full of seed as an egg of meat, and was employed both in embroidery and carving as the symbol of fertility and richness of result or reward. Worked into the High Priest's ephod with bells alternately, they were placed not at the top nor yet the middle, but in the hem at the bottom of the robe (Ex. xxxix. 23–26) to show it is not the beginning, or even the progress of a virtuous life, but rather the persevering end that obtains the crown and reward.

Rainbow

The correct translation of Gen. ix. 13, namely, "I have set My bow in the cloud," is dealt with elsewhere. Here we only deal with its symbolism. Its significance as a token of peace between God and man was written large upon the heavens for every eye to read, for—

(1) Its rundle, or the part of it which should look towards the object aimed at, is turned away from the earth, thereby showing that it aims not at men; and

(2) It has no string; it is a bow unbent, and therefore a sign of friendship. "Lange describes it as 'the sun's triumph over the floods; the glitter of his beams imprinted on the rain-cloud as a mark of subjection.' And as the rainbow throws its radiant arch over the expanse between heaven and earth, uniting the two together as with a wreath of beauty after they have been engaged in an elemental war, what a fitting image does it present to the thoughtful eye of the essential harmony that still subsists between the higher and the lower spheres!"

To the above note Principal Fairbairn adds some lines by John Newton as beautiful as they are simple:—

> "When the sun with cheerful beams
> Smiles upon a low'ring sky,
> Soon its aspect softened seems,
> And a rainbow meets the eye;
> While the sky remains serene
> This bright arch is never seen.

" Thus the Lord's supporting power
Brightest to His saints appears,
When affliction's threat'ning hour
Fills their sky with clouds and fears ;
He can wonders then perform,
Paint a rainbow on the storm.

" Favoured John a rainbow saw
Circling round the Throne above ;
Hence the Saints a pledge may draw
Of unchanging covenant love :
Clouds awhile may intervene,
But the bow shall still be seen."

Salt

In the Old Testament salt is used with so many and varied meanings the reader must guard himself against error in the meaning he attaches to it. In its first and chief significance as the symbol of incorruption, it was expressly declared to be necessary for the completion of the covenant between God and man, and took the place in meat offerings of blood in animal offerings. In Lev. ii. 13 (cf. Num. xviii. 19) we read that every offering was seasoned with salt to signify the purity and perfection that should be extended through every part of the service, and through the hearts and lives of God's officers. In the twenty-first book of his *Natural History*, Pliny gives a remarkable statement, showing how the same custom ruled amongst the Romans, for " no sacrifice was offered to the gods without the salt cake." It may not be generally known that our

own word "salary" comes from the Latin *salaria*, which were the honourable rewards given to soldiers, deriving that word from the pleasant and grateful favours which salt on the table symbolised.

In Deut. xxix. 23 it is taken as the symbol of barrenness; and we read in Judges ix. 45 that when Abimelech took a stronghold he "beat down the city and sowed it with salt." When the city of Milan was taken in 1162 A.D. the walls were razed, and it was sown with salt. In still later times it was the custom in France to sow the house of a man with salt who had been declared a traitor to his king.

Because salt preserved food and made it palatable it was taken as a sign of wisdom, and in Col. iv. 6 we find S. Paul bidding the Colossians to season their speech with salt.

Then again, because salt was used at meals and sacrifices, we find it used as a token of hospitality (Ezra iv. 14), which, literally translated, should read, "Now, forasmuch as we are salted with the salt of the king's palace." Because, used in this way as a token of hospitality, it came further to symbolise union and peace. S. Mark ix. 50, "Have salt in yourselves," *i.e.* have peace and friendship one with another.

In the Talmud salt is said to symbolise the Law, for "as the world cannot exist without salt, neither can it without the Law."

Sea

The sea, according to Hebrew thought, is the symbol of peoples gathered into one body or kingdom, and so comes to mean tumult and strife (see Ps. lxv. 7, "He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people").

Familiar to all is the prophecy of the New Heaven and New Earth in Rev. xxi. 1, "and there was no more sea," no turbulent spirits were there to disturb the peace of that happy state.

Vitringa's remark is curious and worth quoting. "The sea in general, in a mystical sense, is taken for the world as opposed to the Church, or for that part of the earth where there is no worship of the true God; for, as the globe is divided into two parts, earth and sea, so the world is divided into two parts, that within and that without the Church, which last comes under the name of sea, as being in continual commotion, as incapable of cultivation, as the seat of storms and tempests and dangerous to navigate." Hence the wicked are compared to the sea in Isa. lvii. 20, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

"Many are aware," writes the Rev. A. Jukes in *The Types of Genesis*, "that the books of Moses deal largely in typical representations, that is, figures of spiritual things, both facts and doctrines of the Christian Dispensation. We cannot read S. Paul without perceiving that he saw far more in Genesis than the mere letter.

The creation with him is the figure of another work which God accomplishes in every saved sinner. 'God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. iv. 6). Then 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new' (2 Cor. v. 17). As much as to say that just as God began to work upon this earth, when all was dark and without form and void, and worked upon it step by step, bringing forth fruits and forms of life, until the image of God, the man created in righteousness, was seen to rule it all; so is it with the soul of man, from 'Let there be light, and there is light' (Gen. i. 3) till the new man in us rules every faculty. The story of Hagar and Sarah too, as is well known, has with S. Paul a sense far deeper than the mere letter. Melchizedek is another example, the import of whose name and acts is familiar to all readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews."

The four great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, figure so largely in Genesis it is interesting to note how their lives may be compared as illustrating different aspects of the same truth. They set forth those four great forms or periods of life which are known and enjoyed after regeneration has been fully reached. Abraham, being the life of faith, shows how the man of faith goes forth, not knowing whither, yet seeking to go to Canaan. Isaac, representing the life of sonship in the land, continues by the wells of water, with many joys and few conflicts. Jacob's is the life of

service, begotten on resurrection ground, and going down into the far country to win a bride and flocks, whom he may bring back with him to share his joy in heavenly places. Joseph, the last and most perfect life, is the life of suffering, which first dreams of rule, and after many hardships and vicissitudes finally attains its ambition.

In Gen. iii. 8 we read that when Adam and Eve sinned they " hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden," employing the very gifts of the Creator which were meant for their enjoyment as a screen to hide them from the Giver. It is not hard to see how often the same thing is done to-day if, instead of the trees of the garden, we read the young man's health and strength of body, or the woman's beauty, the rich man's wealth, or the clever man's reading. " The things that should have been for their wealth become unto them an occasion of falling " (Ps. lxix. 23, P.B.V.). When their eyes were opened " they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons " (verse 7). As Shakespeare says, " Conscience does make cowards of us all," and the guilty pair carried about with them wherever they went the token of their fall, the haunting recollection of the sin they had committed. But God clothed them with skins of animals (verse 21) that had been offered in sacrifice, for animal food was not eaten at the time. It is a beautiful symbolism, showing how the mercy of God triumphs over our fears and sense of shame, teaching the fallen that their guilt

is covered from the eye of heaven, and at the same time giving them a daily reminder of their own past offerings and good deeds. Even the coats on their backs became to them a page of the Gospel perpetually whispering in their ears, "Their life for our life, their clothing of innocence for our shame."

Very many are the passages in Scripture where faithfulness of translation is not sufficient unless attention is also paid to the symbolism of language. Instances have been already given, so it will be enough to take one example in Lamech's song—

Gen. iv. 23, 24. R.V., "And Lamech said unto his wives:
Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:
For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a young man for bruising me:
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold."

Lamech means apparently that with such weapons as he now had at his command he would execute at will deeds of slaughter and retaliation. So that his song may be regarded, to use the words of Dreschler—

"as an ode of triumph on the invention of the sword. He stands at the top of the Cainite development, from thence looks back upon the past, and exults at the

height it has reached. How far has he got ahead of Cain! What another sort of ancestor he! No longer needing to look up in feebleness to God for protection, he can provide more amply for it himself than God did for Cain; and he congratulated his wives on being the mothers of such sons. Thus the history of the Cainites began with a deed of murder, and here it ends with a song of murder."

In a poetical language like Hebrew it is hard to know when or where to stop when dealing with the symbolism which is its chief pride and distinction. One more phrase, and we must bring this chapter to a close, and, being the last, we will take such a frequently occurring one as that of being anointed with oil.

Because the custom is not prevalent in a temperate climate like our own we cannot appreciate the idea, but in hot climates it is customary to anoint the body with oil to protect it from excessive perspiration. When mixed with perfumes it imparted the most agreeable and invigorating sensations, so much so that an athlete would anoint his body as a matter of course before running his race, and in ancient Egypt it was customary for a servant to attend every guest as he seated himself and to anoint his head. In Ps. xxiii. 5, for instance, we find it mentioned as one of the special favours received from God, "Thou anointest my head with oil," and (S. Luke vii. 46) our Lord charges the omission of it by Simon the Pharisee as an evident mark of disrespect. As the body, therefore, anointed with

oil, felt itself enlivened and refreshed, and became supple for the performance of any active labour, it was an apt and fitting symbol of the Soul replenished by the Spirit, so that it may engage heartily in the service of God and run in the way of His commandments.

CHAPTER X

JEWISH ROMANCE

We owe the whole of our Bible, New Testament as well as the Old, to the Jews, but it is curious how little is known of the thoughts and conclusions which the Jews themselves have derived from Scripture. We take from their hands the gift of "the greatest treasure which the world contains," but we hardly ever pause to ask these givers what they themselves have to say about the gift they have presented to us. Indeed, there are many who would have to confess that they have never even heard of the Talmud in which these comments on Scripture by Jewish Rabbis are to be found. It is, indeed, a huge work or compilation, taking three centuries, from about 200 to 500 A.D., or longer to compile; except in selected portions, it has never yet been translated into English, and even an advanced scholar in Hebrew would have to wade through so many pages before he came to anything of interest or real instruction, it is hardly surprising that the work has been left so severely alone. And yet there are parts of this Talmud which are quite delightful for the romance they exhibit and for the curious

constructions they often put on various passages of Scripture.

The name of this great work—Talmud—means, in the first instance, "study" or "learning," from the verb "lamadh," to learn; then it came to mean a special method of learning or arguing, and so in time was applied to the great Corpus Juris of Judaism.

It is divided into two parts, called the Mishnah and Gemarah. Mishnah (*i.e.* Repetition or Tradition) is the Oral Law, as distinguished from the Written Law in Scripture, and the Jews claimed that Moses received this Mishnah from Sinai, and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue. The Gemarah, or Supplement, was a collection of commentaries composed by various Rabbis, and is generally the part referred to when the Talmud is spoken of. These Rabbis worked on the assumption that everything being bound up in the Bible, the beginning and the end of all things, there must be an answer in it to all questions. The only thing wanted was to find the key; once that was found all the riddles and hidden sayings in Scripture could be solved. The persons of the Bible, the kings and the patriarchs, the heroes and the prophets, the women and the children, what they did and suffered, their happiness and their doom, their words and their lives, became, apart from their historical reality, a symbol and an allegory. What the narrative had omitted it

was the duty of these Rabbis to supply. They filled up these gaps; they explained the motives; they enlarged the story; they found connexions between the remotest countries, ages, and people often with a startling realism; and frequently they drew sublime morals from the most commonplace facts. They summed up their four chief methods of dealing with Scripture in the Persian word Paradise, spelt without vowels, PRDS. Each letter was taken as the initial of a certain method.

First came Peshat, the simple understanding of words and things, in accordance with Talmudic rule, "that no verse of the Scripture ever practically travelled beyond its literal meaning," though it might be explained in many different ways. The second, Remes, which means Hint, is the discovery of the indications contained in certain seemingly superfluous letters and signs in Scripture. The third, Derush, or Asking, was the homiletic application of Scripture. The fourth, Sod, or Secret, was the mystery within the Written Word like the philosophy of the Gnostic sects, to which only a few attained.

Let us now take a few examples to show how different the style of Rabbinical comment is from that to be found in our English commentaries, and how keenly alive the Jews were to the romance of their language. Take, for instance, the following comment given in the Talmud on the Ten Commandments :—

"In what way were the Ten Commandments given? Five on one table, and five on the other.

"There it is written, 'I am the Eternal One, thy God,' and opposite to it, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Scripture teaches that the person who sheds blood lessens the Image of the King, 'for in the Image of God made He man.'—Gen. ix. 6.

"It is written, 'Thou shalt have no other gods,' and opposite to it, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' Scripture teaches that whosoever practises idolatry is adjudged to have committed adultery behind God's back.

"It is written, 'Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain,' and opposite to it, 'Thou shalt not steal.' Scripture teaches that whosoever steals will finally swear falsely also, as it is written, 'Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely?'—Jer. vii. 9.

"It is written, 'Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy,' and opposite to it, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness.' Scripture teaches that whosoever desecrates the Sabbath testifies that God did not create the world and rest on the seventh day; but whosoever keeps the Sabbath testifies that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

"It is written, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' and opposite to it, 'Thou shalt not covet.' Scripture teaches that whosoever lusteth will finally beget a son who will curse his father and mother, and will honour him who does not honour his father.

"Therefore the Ten Commandments were given, five on one table and five on the other."

It was said above that these Rabbis "found connexions between the remotest countries, ages,

and people often with a startling realism." A curious illustration may be found in the Talmud comment on the Hebrew word Ê-chah, which means How? and occurs in the text Isa. i. 21, "How is the faithful city become an harlot?" The more usual spelling of the word is Êch, and seeing that explanation of some kind was needed for the form Ê-chah which the word here takes, an ingenious Rabbi made the following comment: "Three prophets used the expression Ê-chah in their prophecies, Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Moses said, 'How can I myself alone bear?' (Deut. i. 12). Isaiah said, 'How is the faithful city become an harlot!' (Isa. i. 21). Jeremiah said, 'How doth the city sit solitary!' (Lam. i. 1).

"Rabbi Levi said, 'It is like a noble woman who had three friends; one of them saw her in her honour; another saw her in her abandon; and the third saw her in her sorrow.' Moses saw them (the Israelites) in their honour, and said, How can I myself alone bear? Isaiah saw them in their abandon and said, How is the faithful city become an harlot! Jeremiah saw them in their sorrow and said, How doth the city sit solitary!"

Ben Azzai went further, and took the four letters of the word for How?—namely, Aleph, Yod, Caph, Hê, and made further comment by making each letter symbolise a truth. Aleph the first letter of the alphabet, in Hebrew signifies the number one, which he took to be The One, *i.e.* God. Yod in Hebrew signifies ten, and this he took to be the

Ten Commandments. Caph is the Hebrew letter for twenty, which he took as referring to twenty generations; and Hê is Hebrew for five, which in his mind symbolised the five books of the Law, which we call the Pentateuch. Placing these ideas together, he made the following comment, "Israel went into captivity only after it had denied the Holy One of the world (Aleph), the ten Words or Commandments (Yod), the Circumcision which had been commanded after twenty (Caph) generations, *i.e.* to Abraham who lived twenty generations after Adam, and the five (Hê) books of the Law."

Later on we will come to further instances of this Jewish method of arguing called Gematria.

Ex. xvii. 11. "And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed." Did the hands of Moses help Israel to victory, or did they destroy Amalek? asks the Jewish commentator, and he replies, "Neither; but as long as he pointed his hand upward the Israelites looked up to and believed in Him who had commanded Moses to do thus, and the Holy One, praised be He, vouchsafed to them marvels and victories."

Rabbi Eliezer said, "So long as Moses kept up his hand he reminded Israel that they would be victorious through the word of the Law which was to be revealed by him."

The Rabbis were specially fond of counting up texts and passages as well as the words and letters found in the Bible, and we find a curious passage

in the Talmud where it says that—In the Law Moses gave six hundred injunctions to the Children of Israel. As these might prove too numerous to commit to memory, David brought them down to eleven in Ps. xv. Isaiah reduced these eleven to six in chapter xxxiii. 15. Micah (vi. 8) further reduced them to three; and Isaiah (lvi. 1) once more brought them down to two. These two Amos (v. 4) reduced to one. But lest it might be supposed from this that God could be found in the fulfilment of the law only Habakkuk (ii. 4) said, "The just shall live by his faith."

In reading the names of the Old Testament it is not likely that many have noticed a point to which the Talmud draws attention. In speaking of the wicked the name is placed first, thus "Nabal is his name" (1 Sam. xxv. 25), "Sheba the son of Bichri by name" (2 Sam. xx. 21); but in the case of the pious the word "name" stands first—"and his name was Manoah" (Judges xiii. 2), "and his name was Kish" (1 Sam. ix. 1), "and his name was Elkanah" (1 Sam. i. 1), "and his name was Boaz" (Ruth ii. 1). In these cases the description was so worded to show that they resemble their Maker, as it is written, "But by My Name Jehovah was I not known to them" (Ex. vi. 3).

Speaking of names, a peculiar comment relating to the importance of marriage is given in the Talmud, "He who remains unmarried deserves not the name of a man; for it is written, Male and female created He them, and He called their name Man (Adam)."

Any one who has the patience to wade through the voluminous writings of the Talmud can scarcely fail to be struck with the naïve wit of some of the remarks which it has to offer on Scripture, or with the beauty of thought contained in many of its comments.

The remark, for instance, seems as if written to meet our modern sceptics, where it is said, "There was a wise design in making man last of all creatures, as sceptics might have said that man was helping in the creation of things."

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob" (Num. xxiv. 5). This praise they received because their windows were not opposite each other, so that neighbours could not look into each other's houses.

Parents should never make a favourite of one child in particular. For some ells of bright cloth (Gen. xxxvii. 3) the Children of Israel were made slaves in Egypt.

"The voice of thy brother's blood (margin, bloods) crieth unto Me from the ground" (Gen. iv. 10). The word "blood" stands in Hebrew in the plural number to indicate that the blood of him together with that of his seed had been shed.

There is not a single bird more persecuted than the dove; yet God has chosen her to be offered up upon the Altar. The bull is hunted by the lion, the sheep by the wolf, the goat by the tiger. And God said, "Bring Me a sacrifice not from them that persecute, but from them that are persecuted."

Ps. cxxxix. 4, P.B.V. "Thou hast fashioned me

behind and before : and laid Thine Hand upon me." On this text Rabbi Johanan comments, If man is worthy of it he enjoys two worlds, as it is written, " Thou hast made me for afterwards (*i.e.* the future world) and for formerly (this present world)," but if not then he will have to give an account, as it is written, " And Thou hast laid Thine Hand upon me."

A man should always follow the custom of the place (compare our expression, " Do at Rome as Rome does "). Moses went up towards heaven and ate not. The angels came down to earth and ate.

Everything that was created in the six days of creation needs making or preparation. Thus mustard needs moistening, wheat grinding, and man repentance.

The enjoyment of the world to come is figuratively spoken of in Rabbinical writings as The Banquet (cf. Rev. xix. 9). The Talmud cites Ex. xxiv. 11, " also they saw God and did eat and drink," to show that the Beatific Vision will be a perpetual feast.

Gematria

Another very curious method of Jewish comment in the Talmud is known by the name of Gematria, which some derive from the Greek word Geometria, whilst others take it as coming, with the order of letters changed, from the Greek Grammateia. It denotes an arithmetical method of explanation, in which the numerical values of the Hebrew letters

are taken into account, for the Hebrews used the letters of their alphabet instead of figures for numbers. Thus one word may be substituted for another if the addition of letters in the word substituted is equivalent to the addition of letters in the word that is treated. For example, Jacob's ladder is identified with Mount Sinai because the letters in the Hebrew word for ladder are Samech, Lamedh, Mem. Now, Samech stands for 60, Lamedh for 30, and Mem for 40, and added together these three numbers make a total of 130. The Hebrew for Sinai is Samech, Yod, Nun, Yod. Samech, as just stated, = 60, Yod 10, and Nun 50. So Sinai numerically treated, 60+10+50+10=130, and the Hebrew for ladder makes the same total, hence Jacob's ladder is identified with Mount Sinai.

The Egyptian bondage was to last 210 years because it is said in Gen. xlii. 2, "Go down thither." The Hebrew letters for "go down" are Resh, Daleth, and Vav. Resh 200, Daleth 4, and Vav 6, 200+4+6=210, hence in the saying, "Go down," it was prophesied that the bondage in Egypt would last 210 years.

The first Temple was to stand 410 years, for it was said (Lev. xvi. 3), "Thus shall Aaron come into the Holy Place." The Hebrew letters for "Thus" are Beth 2, Zayin 7, Aleph 1, and Tau 400, 2+7+1+400=410, hence the duration of the Temple for 410 years was foretold according to the text.

Esther iii. 11. "And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do

with them as it seemeth good to thee." Haman can hardly have been aware as the Talmudists afterwards discovered that when the king said to him, "The silver is given to thee," he was hinting at the gallows on which he would afterwards be hanged! The numerical value of the letters in hac-caseph, "the silver," is the same as the numerical value of the letters in ha-ets, "the gallows," for the letters in both words total 165.

Deut. vi. 6. "And these words which I command thee." The Hebrew letters for "I" are Aleph, Nun, Caph, Yod, or numerically 1+50+20+10, and according to an ingenious Rabbi this shows that God, the One (Aleph), has chosen out of 70 (Nun, Caph, or 50+20) nations Israel, whose name begins with the letter Yod.

It is curious to note how many points might be brought forward against Judaism and in favour of Christianity if Scripture was to be treated in the way that the Jews themselves have done. For instance, the first letter of the Hebrew Bible (in Gen. i. 1) is Beth; the last letter of the Bible, according to the Jewish canon (in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23), is Lamedh, but Beth lamedh, or the word Bal, is the Hebrew for "nothing," showing that the Old Testament is one great negative unless it has the New Testament to follow and explain it. According to the familiar saying of the early Church, "The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is explained by the New.

The first word of the Bible, B'rêshîth, expanded

acrostically foreshadows the great truth of the Incarnation, for transposing the Hebrew letters we get instead of B'rêshîth, " In beginning," the two Hebrew words Bâ-thî rash, which mean " I came a poor man " (cf. Phil. ii. 5–8, which speaks of Jesus Christ emptying Himself of the glory He had with the Father and taking upon Him the form of a servant).

If the " mater lectionis " placed for vocal purposes is taken from Elohim, the Hebrew word for God, we get the four letters Aleph, Lamedh, Hê, and Mem. These four letters typify the four quarters of the globe, and show that He is not a God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also.

The sacred name Jehovah consists of three letters, Yod, Hê, and Vav, with the second of the three (*i.e.* Hê) repeated. This points to the three Persons of the Godhead, and, as it were, prophesies the Incarnation, or repetition in human flesh, of the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity.

Reasoning, however, of this kind will appear far-fetched and a little too romantic for the matter-of-fact Englishman, so in case the writer is in fault in quoting such instances, any unfavourable impression must be removed by giving some of the gems of the Talmud. They are too numerous to attempt anything more than a few examples, and the reader who wishes to follow the subject further is recommended to read Trubner's *Oriental Miscellany*, or Dr. Charles Taylor's *Pirqe Aboth* (1897), or *Wit and Wisdom of the Talmud*, by the Rev. M. C. Peters.

He who acquires knowledge, without imparting it to others, is like a myrtle in the desert, where there is no one to enjoy it.

Jerusalem was destroyed because the instruction of the young was neglected.

Much have I learned from my teachers, more from my companions, most from my pupils.

The chief thing is not knowledge, but the use to which it is put.

What the child says out of doors he has learned indoors.

Two pieces of coin in one bag make more noise than a hundred. (The man who has " only two ideas in his head " airs his knowledge more than the well-informed.)

He who loves thee scolds thee.

This is the punishment of the liar, that when he tells the truth nobody believes him.

A lie has no feet.

When Satan cannot come himself he sends wine as a messenger.

At the first glass—a lamb ; at the second glass—a lion ; at the third glass—a swine.

When the ox is down many are his butchers.

Too many captains sink the ship.

A man without fitting companions is like the left-hand without the right.

The egg of to-day is better than the hen of to-morrow.

In the town where one lives the name will do, outside of it the dress must do.

Rather be thou the tail among lions than the head among foxes.

When the thief has no opportunity to steal he considers himself an honest man.

It is not the mouse that is the thief, but the hole.

He who wishes to be forgiven must forgive.

Every house a temple, every heart an altar, every human being a priest.

The reward of good works is like dates: sweet and ripening late.

He gives much who gives with kindness.

When a poor man and a rich man wish to borrow, give the poor man the preference.

Quarrelling is the weapon of the weak.

The Bible was given to establish peace.

As the ocean never freezes so the gates of repentance never close.

When the righteous dies it is the earth that loses. The lost jewel will always be a jewel, but the possessor who has lost it may well weep.

Sayings such as the above are scattered like gold-dust over the whole range of the Talmud, and they illustrate the fertility of thought, the delicate charm of the Hebrew mind through which the Oracles of God were transmitted to mankind. The most which the writer can do is to lift up a corner of the veil to enable the English reader to perceive the marvellous wealth of thought which lies hidden in the romance of the Hebrew language, and the reader who catches the fascination of the subject will very soon find himself exclaiming like the Queen of Sheba of old when she went to test for herself the wisdom of Solomon, "Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (1 Kings x. 7).

It would not, however, be fitting to close this

chapter without reference to the Parables and Anecdotes which the Jews, like all Easterns, loved so fondly as the means of imparting their thoughts to others. We will, therefore, give one example of each, both of them connected with the problem of life and its lasting issues.

Parable.

A great crowd once assembled with joy at the harbour because a ship was about to be launched into the sea. When it glided out the people rejoiced and gladsome music was played. Soon after a ship came into the harbour, but nobody troubled himself about it. In silence and without salutation it was anchored. A philosopher who stood by thought to himself: "How perversely do men act! Ought they not rather to have rejoiced over the ship which has happily escaped the dangers of the sea, and has returned to the harbour laden with rich treasures? On the contrary, they rejoice over the ship whose fate is uncertain, and which has to encounter a multitude of dangers. The new-born babe is like a ship beginning its voyage: the dying is like a ship which is just about to enter the haven.

Take, for example of Rabbinical anecdotes, one that was told by Abraham Ibn Chasdai and called—

The Prince and the Dervish.

In the Far East there was a little island the inhabitants of which had some strange customs, notably in regard to their selection of a king to reign over them. Being averse to an hereditary monarchy, they used to go once every year to the seashore, and choose the first

poor and shipwrecked passenger whom they happened to meet there as their king. As such he was driven in a state coach to a magnificent palace, and there he was permitted to enjoy for a year all the rights and privileges of an Eastern Potentate. But as soon as the year of his reign was over, the king was stripped of his royal garments, brought back to the very spot where he had been found, and there left to himself.

Once, however, it so happened that the stranger, whom they had selected as their king, was a prudent man and experienced in worldly matters. Astonished at his sudden elevation, he made enquiries of one of the islanders whose confidence he had gained, and learned from him the real reason. He accordingly devised a plan, from which he hoped that he and his friend would derive some lasting advantage. They were simply to go on a dark night to the State treasury, and to take away from thence a quantity of jewels (which by right were the king's property for the time being) and hide them in a cave near the sea; they would thus have some means of subsistence when the year of the king's reign was ended. The plan was speedily effected. After his year's reign was over he was taken back to the place whence he had come, stripped of his royal robes, told he was no longer king and would have to do for himself. He and his friend took possession of their hidden treasure, and with it they went on board a passing ship, which brought them to a foreign country, where the sale of their valuables enabled them to live a life of comfort and happiness.

This tale was related by the Dervish to the Prince, in the course of one of their conversations, as an illustration of human life. When we come

into existence, the Dervish said, we are, every one of us, helpless and poor, but after we have grown up we have at our disposal all the wealth and delights which this beautiful world of ours offers to all men. But we must never ignore the fact that our stay on earth is but brief, and that thus, as it were, we are kings for one year only. It therefore behoves man to devote his brief existence to the performance of noble deeds which will, when his life in this world is ended, procure for him in the world to come God's everlasting favour and grace.

CHAPTER XI

THE PREACHER'S TREASURY

It was a grand saying of the old Romans and characteristic of their nation, " Let none be dependent who can be independent " (*Alterius non sit qui suus esse potest*). And no motto could put more concisely the advantage of reading the Old Testament in the language in which it was written.

The mere fact of being one's own master in consulting the original is in itself delightful, to know that one is beholden to no man for the meaning given to any passage, that one is going straight to the fountain head of revelation, in one's own study and at one's own table, reading or voicing the very words pronounced by Moses, David, or Isaiah—these and such-like advantages diffuse a sense of sacredness over the page which has to be felt rather than described.

Quite likely the passage in hand will present difficulties, difficulties in grammar, translation, or exegesis, but at all events the person who grapples with these difficulties is on the right track towards truth; the ground he has to cover may prove troublesome, but every step is bringing him nearer

to the desired goal of arriving at the mind of the writer who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. The time occupied in attaining this end may be long, but not an hour nor yet a minute of it is wasted. Progress may be slow, but the student knows that he is not on the false track of any version, such as the Greek, the Latin, or the English, which may have created a difficulty of its own such as does not exist in the original. Certainly it will take some time and considerable experience before he can avoid making mistakes, but at all events he has the satisfaction of knowing that he is not being misled by the mistakes of others.

"Faith with most men," writes Professor Max Müller, "is not faith in God or in truth, but faith in the faith of others." And in the same way it is true, though it sounds a bald way of putting it, what most people read is not God's Word, but the word of some eminent though fallible divine. Important as it is, to draw attention to this fact where the reader happens to be reading the Bible for his own private instruction, it is far more important in the case where one happens to be reading the Bible for the purpose of instructing others. To quote the weighty words of the great divine, Richard Hooker, "The teacher's error is the people's trial, harder and heavier by so much to bear, as he is in worth and regard greater that mispersuadeth them" (*Eccl. Pol.*, V. lxii. 9).

Nor is it only to correct mistakes and avoid pitfalls that the teacher needs to consult the original

when quoting a text from the Old Testament, but also to find inspiration for thought from the living ideas of the writer's diction. Macaulay remarks of Milton, "The effect of his poetry is produced not so much by what it expresses as by what it suggests; not so much by the ideas it directly conveys as by other ideas which are connected with them." The same may be said of Hebrew. It is full of romance from start to finish. Its appeal is to the imagination through the understanding. Its words are suggestive of thoughts which no version can convey, because pregnant with unuttered meanings which the most faithful translator must fail to convey through the medium of another language. It opens out vistas of thought where the ordinary passer-by would only notice a closed door in the wall, like those of ancient Italian palaces, and when that door is passed a spacious courtyard is disclosed, with a beautiful marble fountain in the centre, splashing with cool, refreshing stream of never-failing water.

Better than all the Helps to Preachers, Outlines of Sermons, Promptuaries for the Perplexed Parson, and such-like, is the power of referring to the original, so that the preacher may make his own line of thought—a line of thought which will prove all the more valuable to himself because it is his own production, and all the more likely to tell on the minds of his congregation, because it is given to them fresh, not secondhand. Indeed, the perplexed and overworked parson might well dispense

with no small part of the books on his shelves if he always kept the Hebrew Bible within reach on his desk—"All my fresh springs shall be in thee."

Take a few examples to show how suggestive Hebrew is for homiletic purposes :—

Jer. xiii. 27. A.V., "Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?"

R.V., "Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! thou wilt not be made clean: how long shall it yet be?" *i.e.* how long shall it be before thy chastisement begins? A stage comes in the history of nations no less than in the experience of individual men, when the preaching of repentance is not sufficient; when it ought to be supplemented by the solemn reminder that continued refusal to obey may end in something far more solemn—the inability to give obedience; that the *will not* may become the *cannot*, and that in such a crisis there is nothing left to the disobedient but the dreaded discipline of exile (cf. S. Matt. xxiii. 37, 38).

Prov. xxiii. 35. R.V. The Drunkard's Wail.

"They have stricken me and I was not hurt; they have beaten me and I felt it not: When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

(Na-cah, "stricken," in Hiphil refers to single striking.)

(Ha-lam, "beaten," is the repeated blow, or constant nipping, used of the anvil in Isa. xli. 7, and horse hoofs, Judges v. 6.)

Prov. xiii. 15. "Good understanding giveth favour: But the way of transgressors is hard," or as the R.V. translates the latter clause, "But the way of the treacherous is rugged." What ideas would be conveyed to the mind by either translation it is hard to say; no doubt the ordinary passer-by would believe that the last represents a door which leads to something, but his trouble is that the door is closed, and he has no key at hand to undo the lock. Commentaries, no doubt, if he can afford them, will supply the preacher with the key he needs, but various are the interpretations given to obscure passages by different commentators; the teacher would feel more confidence in handling the text if he knew enough of the language to find his own meaning. Could he avail himself of the ideas supplied by the original he would find the closed doors opening to disclose a whole range of thought such as would prove both instructive to the taught and romantic to the teacher.

The word ê-than, translated "hard" in one version, "rugged" in the other, means literally a perennial stream, and our translators have taken the idea of "hard" or "rugged" from that of "the lane which has no turning," or a path where one obstacle is only overcome to find another taking its place. What the original suggests to the mind is that "one never gets to the end of the mischief caused by treacherous persons," or, if the imagery is further followed up, the passage might be freely translated—

"Good understanding giveth favour, but the flow of tears is never dried which a false friend leaves behind him."

Ps. xxxvii. 5. R.V., "Commit thy way unto the Lord," literally, "Roll thy care on the Lord"—the word for "roll"—gôl—suggests the history of Gilgal, Joshua v. 9, and also S. Luke xxiv. 2, where the weak women found the great stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

> "I came to Jesus as I was,
> Weary and worn and sad,
> I found in Him a resting-place,
> And He has made me glad."

A striking imagery of God's dealings with His people is supplied in Ps. cxxxix. 3 by consulting the original—

A.V. "Thou compassest my path and my lying down."
R.V. "Thou searchest out (margin, winnowest) my path and my lying down."

The verb—za-rah—used for "compass," "search out," means to scatter, or scatter to the winds, and so to winnow, as in the margin of R.V. The imagery is that of One taking a handful of past days and nights (times of activity, and times of silence or inactivity, for "They also serve who only stand and wait"). This handful of past days, like a handful of so many ears of corn, is taken up and flung before the wind, that it may carry away the

empty husks, and leave the good grain behind. So does God winnow out the past days of life that He may see which of them are worth storing in the garner, which of them have strengthened the character of the immortal soul, and how many of them have been spent in frivolling and empty amusement, with nothing to show for the years that are past.

The patience of God in appealing to His people to consider their own interests is often enforced by such well-known texts as Rom. x. 21 (cf. Isa. lxv. 2), "All day long I have stretched forth My Hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Or Jer. vii. 25, "I have sent unto you all My servants, the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them." Or the still better known text, Rev. iii. 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." One of the most beautiful of all such passages is to be found in Isa. xlv. 4, by paying regard to the verb and the tense in which that verb is used. In our own version it reads, "I have surnamed thee: though thou hast not known Me," or, as the passage should be translated, "I keep on gently calling thee, and thou hast not known it was I."

A reference to the original of this text followed by another reference to the lexicon to see the force of the verb Ca-nah that is used will readily suggest to the preacher's mind the still small voice of God, or the sudden arrest of thought in reading Scripture, or the loving kindness of the Friend who keeps on making His gentle appeal.

" Jesus calls us : o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild restless sea.
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying, ' Christian, follow Me.' "

Gossip and evil-speaking, lying and slandering are more frequently and more clearly denounced in Scripture than they are in the modern pulpit, and a few illustrations will be taken from the original to show how cleverly the sacred writers expose the underhand methods of the tale-bearer. In Ps. xli. 6 we have the visit described of a busybody who calls at his friend's house that he may collect gossip for a malicious tongue—

" And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity :
His heart gathereth iniquity to itself ;
When he goeth abroad he telleth it."

The literal translation of the middle clause is wonderfully suggestive, for the verb used—qa-bhats—means he gathers, grasps, covers over with his hand, as a thief might do when he covets some article on the table. So the gossip hears something that admirably suits his design, and rolls his tongue over it, smacks his lips with delight, but says nothing, that the speaker may not detect the use he will make of it. He sits there, as we say, trying to draw his friend, and when his heart has gathered iniquity to itself, he leaves the house, awaiting favourable opportunity to retail what he has acquired to others. And so we find in Lev. xix. 16, " Thou shalt not go

up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people." The word here used for "tale-bearer"—Ra-chîl—means, literally, a pedlar, one who travels about making scandal his wares, getting the secrets of one house and retailing them at the next. This they do so cleverly with their innuendoes and cunning hints that more mischief is done by things left unsaid than by those actually expressed. "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adder's poison is under their lips" (Ps. cxl. 3). If it was upon their lips they might be detected and brought to book, so they keep the innuendo under their lips, meaning more than they say. And by giving a more accurate rendering of a difficult word the R.V. in Prov. xviii. 8 describes the relish which these people take in the foul garbage that passes through their mouths—

> "The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels:
> And they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."

In the same way that delicious viands gratify the natural appetite, so the corrupt taste of a depraved heart is gratified by listening to the voice of scandal.

Whether a preacher knows Hebrew or not, it is always as well for him to verify any text he takes from the Old Testament by looking up the Revised Version. It would take a book in itself to illustrate the advantages it would be to him to so do, but one instance may be quoted from Isaiah to show how much more accurate than our Authorised Version is

the imagery given by the Revised Version specially in its margin.

Isa. xxxv. 7. A.V. "And the parched ground shall become a pool." The idea of the prophet is not, as this translation would imply, that dry ground would yield fresh water where none was expected; rather it was the opposite, that expectations, often disappointed, would be at last fulfilled. Literally it means that the mirage, which held out false and mocking hope to the traveller, was no longer to betray his confidence, but to meet his anticipations. So we read in the Revised Version, "And the glowing sand (margin, mirage) shall become a pool." The imagery is striking, well understood by a people living near the desert, and as applied to Israel, foretells that the Lord shall yet find in the people called by His Name (in that mirage amongst the nations of the earth) the fruits of righteousness for which He has long looked in vain.

And yet, useful as the Revised Version is to the English reader for the new light which it often throws on familiar words, it must be understood that there are very many cases where no translation can faithfully transmit the light that shines in the original wording. The preacher has to perceive the living thought in the written word even though he finds himself unable to express it. For instance—

Ps. lxiii. 9. "But those that seek my soul to destroy it,
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.'

The word "to destroy it"—l'shô-âh—suggests the suddenness of the attack like a storm getting up unexpectedly, and implies the distant mutters of a tempest whilst it is actually approaching; the voices and yells of the mob as it comes surging down the road in angry tumult is already heard, and the Psalmist takes that picture of approaching storm to describe the peril with which he is threatened, and his assurance that the earth will swallow up his foes as it swallowed Korah and his company (Num. xvi. 31–33).

Take another illustration which speaks in contrast to this of the high parts of the earth. Ps. civ. 18, "The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats," *i.e.* even the barren parts of the earth, as they seem, have their uses, and serve to shelter certain animals that are adapted to them.

Or take another instance of imagery which is full of suggestion to the preacher from the saying of Hanani the Seer, given in 2 Chron. xvi. 9, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." This text is often quoted to explain the watchful care of the Almighty seated upon the Throne from which He beholds all the dwellers on earth, and as the English stands the rapidity of that vigilance is well expressed. Besides rapidity, however, the Hebrew for "run to and fro"—m'shôt-tîm—conveys the imagery of a bird flapping its wings, making straight for its object as a bird flies, and that so silently overhead that the watched

one is scarcely conscious of the benign Providence hovering round his path.

Among the phrases used by Isaiah in the fifty-third chapter to describe the sufferings of the Messiah there is one specially applicable to our own day when its right meaning is seen. It occurs in the third verse—Kha-dal î-shîm—and is translated "rejected of men," as if there had been or was to be some open act of rebellion or defiance. Active opposition, which the translation implies, is generally an advantage rather than hindrance, as S. Paul testifies in 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9, "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries," or, as this latter clause should be translated, "because there are many adversaries." If we may say so, S. Paul, like the Irishman, was "spoiling for a fight," and he hoped to make headway because he knew that he would be opposed. For the idea that opposition is better than indifference, compare Rev. iii. 15, 16, "I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The sting of the bitterness to which Isaiah refers in the Messiah's sufferings was not active opposition, such as rejecting, for that might be overcome, but rather that He should be "forsaken by men," "dropped by society," or, as the word Kha-dal literally means, "given up with a sigh of content," as if it had been an irksome duty

to acknowledge the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. The same verb is used in Isa. i. 16, "cease to do evil," or more literally, "loose yourself from the strain of doing evil."

Instances like the above are of frequent occurrence in the pages of the Hebrew writers; some slight attention to the actual word used, some trifling alteration of the familiar rendering, and the echo from past days comes sounding in our ears as if it had been expressly meant for our own day and generation. It may be that familiarity with the accepted translation has blunted our powers of perception from perceiving the beauty of the truth which the words convey, or it may be that the idioms of modern thought have changed since the reign of King James I., but, whatever the cause, the fact remains that every verse of the Bible brings fresh meaning to the reader when he translates it for himself direct from the original.

For suggestive thought, beyond and above any contained in English version, take such an example as Ps. li. 10. This has been called "the Priest's Psalm," and there, right in the centre, with the same number of verses after as before it, as though it were the pivot on which the poem turns, we find that summing up of sacerdotal need, which every clergyman might take as the motto of his priesthood—

> "Create in me a clean heart, O God;
> And renew a right spirit within me."

As the English stands, there are many things which a "right spirit" might be taken to signify, but the Hebrew removes all ambiguity, and points the thought to one special grace which is needed in clerical life, perhaps more than any other, and that is the grace to persevere (*per-severa*—through the hardships and disappointments of life to keep on steadily plodding. "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations," said our Lord to the Apostles). And the echo of that stricken heart comes to us across the ages bidding us to pray not only for the clean heart, but also for the ru-akh na-chôn, the right and steadfast spirit, strong to weather the storms without and to remain unshaken by tumultuous passions within.

> "The Christian Pastor, bow'd to earth
> With thankless toil, and vile esteem'd,
> Still travailing in second birth
> Of souls that will not be redeem'd,
> Yet steadfast set to do his part,
> And fearing most his own vain heart."

If the preacher does happen to know Hebrew and goes to his Hebrew Bible to verify the meaning he is taking from a certain text, he must needs remember that the force of the passage is brought out by the order in which the words occur as well as by their correct translation. We have an example of this in Judges v. 2, where the R.V. has both corrected the wrong translation in the A.V. and also allowed due weight to the order in which the

Hebrew words occur. The passage is taken from the commencement of Deborah's song—

A.V. "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves."

What Deborah wished to emphasise was the fact of the rulers taking their right place in front of the army, and that the people encouraged by their bold lead willingly fell in to take their share of the battle. And so the Revisers, following the order of the words in the original, translate—

"Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye the Lord."

It is needless to say that Scripture abounds in texts and passages which illustrate and enforce the numerous charitable and philanthropic efforts that are going on in the present day, but it is remarkable to notice the wonderful hints which Scripture often throws out in the texts that are taken for charity sermons. Take such an example as Isa. i. 17, where the A.V. translates, "Relieve the oppressed." What the prophet recommended those seven centuries before Christ—and we are at last coming round to the twentieth century after—was not merely to concern ourselves over "the submerged tenth," but more directly over the forces that submerge and keep them submerged; in other words, to deal with

the cause if we wish to remove the effect. The Revisers have given this text its correct rendering in their margin, "Set right the oppressor." The latter verb (oppressor) is the active participle in the original, not the passive, kha-môts, not kha-mûts. Charity in the slums is a good work, but Isaiah was more practical, and suggested what would be even better work, namely, to get hold of the authority which allows such slums to exist.

Ps. xii. 1. "The faithful fail from among the children of men," or, according to the Prayer-book Version, which is generally quoted in this passage, "The faithful are minished from among the children of men." Preachers often use this text to express their disappointment when they find themselves preaching to a dwindling congregation, and that expression, "the faithful," may fairly be taken, as it is in modern speech, to express those who avail themselves of the means of Grace and attend public worship. The Psalmist, however, goes deeper into the matter: for "faithful" he used the word â-men, and points our thoughts to the cause which leads to such deplorable results. Desecration of the Lord's Day is a result; lack of principle, he explains, is the cause. The verse might be rendered, "Help me, Lord, for there is not one godly man left: for principled people are minished from among the sons of men." The Psalmist's complaint is that which one so often hears in this pleasure-seeking age, There is no backbone about this generation; the people are fickle because they are faithless.

In dealing with any controversy that arises out of Scripture, there is nothing more important than to know exactly what Scripture says, instead of being misled by what we or others imagine it to say. Luther's motto, which guided the Reformation, that the best grammarian makes the best theologian (*optimum grammaticum eum etiam optimum theologum esse*), is as true of our own century as it was of the sixteenth. Let us take an example to illustrate the point from the controversy still going on in this country over Confirmation. The old objection so often heard from the last generation that "Confirmation is not mentioned in Scripture" has now been exploded. Any one can see for himself by turning to the Prayer-book that the title there given is "The Order of Confirmation, or Laying on of Hands upon those that are baptized and come to years of discretion"; and any one who says that S. Peter, S. John, or S. Paul are never mentioned in Scripture as laying their hands on Confirmation Candidates with prayer that they might receive the Holy Spirit is simply stating that he does not know his Bible. There can be no dispute whether Confirmation is mentioned in Scripture when chapter and verse are quoted to show where it is mentioned—Acts viii. 14–17 and xix. 1–6, and Heb. vi. 1, 2. This point being cleared, the ground of the controversy is shifted, and objection is taken to this Laying on of Hands as a "meaningless ceremony" because it is no longer accompanied with the miraculous gifts such as we find mentioned

in Acts xix. 6 and implied in Acts viii. 19. We have, however, a direct reference to explain the cessation of miraculous gifts when the rite was once established in the Church by giving a correct translation to Num. xi. 25—

A.V. "When the Spirit rested upon them"—the Seventy Elders forming an office then created—"they prophesied, and did not cease."

R.V. "When the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied, but they did so no more."

A reference to Deut. v. 22 for similar rendering of the Hebrew here employed proves the revised to be the correct rendering.

The Seventy Elders prophesied at this time only, and not afterwards. The sign was granted on the occasion of their appointment to accredit them in their office, in the same way that the gift of Tongues first accompanied Confirmation until the rite was established in the early Church. Afterwards the sign was not continued amongst the Seventy Elders of the people because their proper function was that of governing, not prophesying; but the Office was not suspended because the sign was withdrawn.

Hebrew idioms form another fruitful source of inspiration to the preacher. They cannot fail to suggest various and fresh lines of treatment to his mind when allowance is made for the beautiful shades of meaning which they were originally meant to convey. Take, for example, the title which Isaiah so frequently applies to the coming Messiah,

Ôr Go-vîm, a Light of the Gentiles. The word Ôr is used for the light of the eyes when a faint person recovers consciousness; the picture it portrays before the mind is the restoration of faculties that have for a time been in abeyance, not the creation of new faculties which never before existed. When a faint person comes round he does not receive sight as one who had never seen before, but the faculty that has been in abeyance returns. And so when Isaiah names Christ as the Light of the Gentiles he does not teach that Christ would bring the heathen nations into a relation with the Deity which had never before been formed, but rather that He would bring them back to the old relation in which man was first created; the Light that was to shine on those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death would be a Light to rekindle the faint glimmerings of past days and restore the sense of sonship which they had lost for a season. The prodigal is still his father's son, though he has wasted his substance in a far country; the lost coin retains the image and superscription of the King though covered by the dust and neglect of ages.

"Men of the world" is a title which can scarcely be said to convey to our minds the meaning it had when first coined, as we may find by reference to Ps. xvii. 14. With us it generally means men who have been about the world, whose wits have been sharpened by intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men; so far from wishing to avoid such people it would often benefit those piously disposed

to take a leaf out of their book, for they are more shrewd and practical than the children of light, and the wider view they generally take of the opportunities of present life is a splendid corrective against bigotry and narrow-minded intolerance. When the Psalmist prayed the Lord to save his soul from "men of the world" the phrase had quite a different meaning from what it has amongst us, as a reference to the original shows. The word he uses for the world, khe-led, comes from a root that means to move smoothly and quickly, to slip by without being noticed, and what he asked to be delivered from were the feather-brained children of vanity, the kind of people whose only idea of life was frivolling and in the end nothing to show for the life they had spent. "Save me," he cried, "from these poor moths of the night."

Too literal a translation will often puzzle the English reader in spite of the admirable ruling given by the judicious Hooker whilst commenting on S. John iii. 5, "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of Scripture that where a literal construction will stand the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst" (*Eccl. Pol.*, V. lix. 2). No doubt such a literal construction is useful in the way it preserves the Hebrew idiom, but still there are cases when it has no more value amongst an English congregation than a Jewish shekel would have in a London shop. It is hard, for instance, to think what meaning is conveyed to an English mind by such a phrase as that in Isa. xxiv. 15, "Wherefore

glorify ye the Lord in the fires." But when the reader learns that "the fires" is a poetic expression for warm climates he will at once see the propriety of the rendering in the R.V., "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the East," and further, he will notice how this brings the first clause of the verse into connection with that which follows, "even the Name of the Lord, the God of Israel in the Isles of the sea."

It is a pity that when the Revisers gave a marginal alternative of "or lights or fires" to "the East" in this passage they did not also add that the Hebrew was Urim. The prophet may have meant to suggest the Urim and Thummim through which the Divine Will was at one time revealed. Such a construction would have suggested to the preacher a welcome theme for discourse—"Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the Divine revelations that ye have received," and read in this way the text would be an admirable one for a Patronal or Dedication Festival.

In many cases our English translation has happily caught the force of the Hebrew idiom, but none the less a reference to the original arouses the attention of the reader to the force of his own native language. Thus Isa. xxix. 20, "All that watch for iniquity are cut off.". That exactly represents the Hebrew, which means literally, "those who are sleepless for iniquity," always keeping their eyes open for any opportunity to do wrong, or, as we might say, "trying to smell out mischief."

Those who are acquainted with the Latin know that our word "vestry" is the Latin Vestiarium, the

place where the Vestes or Surplices are kept, and this derivation of the word is explained in 2 Kings x. 22, "And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal."

On the other hand, a translator may be literal without being accurate, because it fails to catch the Hebrew idiom. For instance, we read in Ps. lxv. 1, "Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Sion." In Hebrew the order of words is emphatic, and the omission of certain words supplied in the above translation expresses the awe and breathless surprise of the writer—

"To Thee silence . . . praise,"

i.e. To Thee (belongs) silence (the wonder of thought which bursts forth into) praise. With this we might compare the statement in Ps. xxxix. 4, P.B.V., "My heart was hot within me, and while I was thus musing the fire kindled; and at the last I spake with my tongue," or

"Thought was not: in enjoyment it expired:
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request,
Rapt with still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him: it was blessedness and love."

In Job v. 7 we find the familiar words—

"Yet man is born unto trouble
As the sparks fly upward."

"Sparks" is a correct translation, but to our English mind it fails to suggest the meaning probably intended. Literally the Hebrew says, "the sons of coal," meaning ardent and brave spirits, and the verse has quite a different aspect when taken with this signification—

> "Though man is born to trouble
> Yet brave ones fly upward (or rise superior to the occasion)."

No one can be familiar with the Psalms without being aware of the fact that when a Jew took a dislike to a person he had a forcible way of expressing himself, rather too strong, we sometimes consider it, for modern ears; and when these "cursing Psalms," as they have been called (Ps. xxxv. 4–8; lviii.; lix. 11–13; lxix. 23–29; cix. 5–19; and cf. cxxxvii. 9), come round they are far from welcome to people in the congregation during the hour of Christian worship, no matter how plausible or learned the excuses may be by which they are defended. What strikes the person who reads these Psalms in Hebrew is not only the bitterness of the imprecation, but the subtle ingenuity of thought in the metaphors that are used. The great Book of Nature which supplies even the Angels with themes for song in the praise of God (Isa. vi. 3, "the whole earth is full of His glory") can also supply the minds of men with some of the most fiendish wishes that have ever been expressed. Ps. lviii., for instance, is a long imprecation against the ungodly, and in the eighth verse

we have a metaphor borrowed from Nature which is as ingenious as it is bitter—

A.V. "As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away."
R.V. "Let them be as a snail which melteth and passeth away,"

or, more literally, "Let them be as the snail which melts as it goes," *i.e.* which emits slime moistening its way, so that the further it travels the more it is dissolved, and at length wastes away and dies. The picture is painfully vivid of the fat old sheikh, apparently harmless, who has made a god of his belly, scarcely able by reason of his fatness to waddle down the street, leaving a trail of crime wherever he goes, and wasting his substance in the gratification of carnal appetites.

From such a picture as that it is a welcome relief to turn to the pious expression in Ps. cxix. 109, of one who knows how short and uncertain is man's brief stay amidst the changes and chances of this mortal life, and therefore fixes his hope where true joys are to be found—

"My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget Thy Law."

Many of the ancients have translated this verse, "My soul is always in Thy Hand," and in doing this they destroy the idiom of the language by which "to carry the soul in one's hand" is equivalent to say that one lived in perpetual peril of death. And so the Chaldee Paraphrast, conversant with Hebrew

idiom, has translated it, "My soul (*i.e.* my life) is in danger, as if it were always in my hand." Cf. Job xiii. 14, 15, "Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand? Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Character and the influence of environment in moulding character is a favourite topic with preachers, but when the text is taken from the Old Testament as illustrating this subject, all the more care should be taken that the actual words of Scripture are correctly represented. The final charge of Moses to Joshua, for instance, is frequently used to describe what the character of a God-fearing man should be, "Be strong and of a good courage" (Deut. xxxi. 23). However, a reference to the original shows that Moses did not say practically the same thing twice over, but told Joshua the two chief requisites of a leader, "Be strong of mind, and nimble of foot." If he was to lead Israel successfully he must needs be firm in his decision, quick in his action.

Both the Authorised and Revised Versions miss the important lesson on environment given in Deut. xxxii. 17, "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up" (R.V., to new gods that came up of late) "whom your fathers feared not." The literal meaning of that clause, to which the R.V. gives another rendering, is, "to new gods that come up from near," or from their immediate surroundings, the Moabites and Ammonites.

A discussion was lately raised in the papers

whether honesty could succeed in business, but the preacher conversant with Hebrew has an answer ready to hand in the first word of the first verse of the first Psalm—

"Oh! the straightnesses or uprightnesses of the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly," etc.

Blessed and Honest in Hebrew are synonymous, and the Psalms begin by speaking of the blessedness or happiness of the man who is known to be straightforward in his ways. And certainly it would save that word "blessed" from much of the cant connected with it in modern speech if the idea of honesty, on which the Hebrew word is based, were more largely insisted upon.

Sin is a fact of such widespread and deep significance it must in one way or another influence every sermon preached from a Christian pulpit. It will not, therefore, come amiss, whilst on the subject of the Preacher's Treasury, if we take a few examples to illustrate the advantage of knowing Hebrew for sake of the fresh light it throws on the subject.

In dealing with sin and temptation one of the first and most important truths which the preacher has to enforce is that sin is an alien to the human nature which the Creator made at the beginning. Sin has no right to be there, and must be treated as without any right. When the Prodigal "came to himself" (S. Luke xv. 17, one of the most beautiful touches in the whole of Christ's teaching), he said, "I will arise and go to my Father." There is no

fatality about doing wrong, no necessity, as so many say, for a young man to sow his wild oats, or "have his fling," as if he was driven to it by some force in his nature that he cannot resist. As we read in S. Matt. iv. 6, Satan could tempt the Christ, "Cast Thyself down," but could not do the casting down himself. It is enticement, not compulsion, that comes from without a man, the yielding to that enticement comes from within. It is his own doing. So we read in Deut. iv. 19, that when Moses warned the Children of Israel against sun, moon, and star worship, he did not speak of their being "driven" to it, as the A.V. renders the verb nid-dakh-ta, but of their being "drawn away," as the R.V. more accurately translates.

Another point to emphasise is that when a person sins he does not only render himself liable to death hereafter, but death or separation from God begins as soon as the sin is committed, for "sin is the first half of punishment." Such was the warning given to Adam in Gen. ii. 17, the Lord said unto Adam, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Or, as these last words may literally be translated, "dying thou shalt die": at that moment death enters, and in a dying state shalt thou remain till death has fully conquered (cf. Rom. vi. 23, "The wages of sin—death").

After the sin has been committed there follow the prickings of a guilty conscience, and people think to allay these disquieting reminders by making

excuse or hiding away from the Presence of the Lord, as if absolution went by lapse of time, if they never say anything about their sins, nothing will ever be said to them. Accordingly we read in the ninth and tenth verses of Gen. iii. (the most marvellous description of temptation that has ever been written), that the first thing Adam and Eve did after eating the forbidden fruit was to go and hide themselves. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

The passage reads as if it was the call that made Adam hide himself, but quite a different light for homiletic purposes is thrown on the passage by noticing the force of the conjugation that is here used. The translation "and I hid myself" would have required the Hithpael conjugation Va-eth-khab-bê, as we have it in the eighth verse, but in this tenth verse the verb is in the Niphal conjugation, Va-ê-kha-bhî, and the clause should be rendered, "I was afraid because I was naked, and I remained hidden."

Adam and his wife had hidden themselves before the Lord called, as soon as their conscience smote them, and the passage implies that they remained hidden in spite of calls received, until the final call came which neither of them could resist. In the same way many people throw up religion, not for the reasons alleged that the preaching is weak or because the clergyman is idle, but because they

would sooner not be reminded of their duty towards God. They hide themselves from the Presence of the Lord, and from anything which reminds them of that Presence, because they are smitten with the conscience of a careless, if not wicked, life, and they remain hidden in spite of repeated calls and warnings. For them as for Adam, a call must one day come such as no man can resist.

How merciful these calls are, before that last great call arrives, is shown by the Lord's reasoning with Cain in Gen. iv. 7, after Cain felt in his own mind that the sacrifice he offered had not been accepted, "If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well sin lieth at the door." The word Khat-tâth here rendered "sin" is translated "sin-offering" in Lev. vi. 17, 24, and several other places, and quite a different meaning is given to the passage if we use the same translation for this passage, "If thou doest not well a sin-offering lieth at the door," *i.e.* within ready reach. Instead of the idea that sin lay crouching on the threshold like some ravenous beast waiting to spring on him at any unguarded moment, it really means that a sin-offering, such as his brother had acceptably offered, lay within immediate reach, and there was nothing to prevent his bringing it if he had a mind to do so, so how could he think to escape if he neglected such great and ready salvation? And it conveys a remarkable hint on the perversity of fallen human nature that Cain preferred to remain a fugitive and vagabond to the end of his days rather

than submit to the mediation of blood, and so acknowledge his own personal guilt and shortcomings before the Lord. Even though he cried out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear," he flatly refused to humble himself, and seek forgiveness in the way his younger brother had done.

And yet, merciful as these calls of the Almighty are to those stricken with a guilty conscience, and ready as the means of salvation are which are offered to all, yet it is possible for preachers to go to a dangerous extreme in their attempts to make religion easy. Times without number the lifting up of the Brazen Serpent in Num. xxi. 9 is quoted as if a momentary look to the Cross were all that is needed. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (S. John iii. 14, 15).

The Hebrew for "looked"—hib-bît—in the passage in Numbers is in the Hiphil conjugation, and that conjugation is purposely used to show that it was no cursory glance which saved the serpent-bitten from death, but a steady and fixed gaze which refused to take the eyes off the Means of Grace until the wound was healed. It may have been this force of the conjugation which inspired the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews xii. 2, where he speaks of the athlete fixing his eyes on the goal and looking away from all other things (*aphorontes*) to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith. It was the fixed gaze, as commentators

suppose, that broke the spell of the fever caused by the bites of the fiery serpents and restored the sufferer to health. In the same way the Church teaches the necessity of fixed concentration during the forty days of Lent, if we would learn the lesson of the Cross and wake on the Easter morn from the death of sin unto a new life of righteousness.

So far from lending countenance to these modern systems of making religion easy and simple, Scripture is never more emphatic than in the metaphors used to express the stern discipline and purification a soul must pass through in the process of salvation. Take, for instance, such a familiar text as that in Ps. li. 7, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." The first verb here is in the Piel or Intensive conjugation, and means "wash me thoroughly," and the root meaning of this verb Cha-bhas refers to the custom of taking clothes to the riverside and trampling them underfoot in the running stream till every stain is washed away. Cf. Rev. vii. 14: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb."

We cannot conclude the subject of this chapter without making a brief reference to the handling of familiar texts, and a couple of instances will suffice to show how rich are the grapes that may be found in this vineyard of Hebrew thought. Special care must always be taken not to interfere unduly with well-known texts which have been hallowed in the minds of a nation by long and frequent usage,

and such a text as we find in Deut. xxxiii. 25 comes within this category, "As thy days so shall thy strength be."

It only adds, however, to the value of treasured words when they are explained as containing a further meaning than has been noticed before. The Hebrew word that is used for "strength" in this passage—Dho-bhê—occurs nowhere else in the Bible, and so it would be futile to dogmatise about its correct translation, but the Revisers, by giving a marginal reading, "rest" for "strength," have favoured the connexion between this Hebrew word and the Arabic da-ba, which signifies he rested or was quiet. Falling back on this root meaning, we can take the passage as pointing to a peaceful old age which shall be free from worry and trouble, "According to thy days shall be thy peace or freedom from care." As years increase the storms of life shall sink down to the calm of peaceful sunset. Instead of the weakness and troubles of old age shall come the dreamy hour "between the lights," when the day's work is done, closing thine eyes in quiet solitude to think over the joys of the coming dawn.

In Ps. xvii. 16 the Prayer-book Version reads with words familiar to all—

> "But as for me, I will behold Thy Presence in righteousness: and when I wake up after Thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it."

The imperfect tense of the verb in the first clause does not point to some future date in another existence when "thine eyes shall see the King in His

beauty," but rather to a revelation that has been already commenced and increases as the days pass on. Compare the present tense in the Greek word for " knowing " in S. John xvii. 3, to show that the revelation of God to man is a progressive revelation, an ever-deepening knowledge, " And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee (literally, that they may keep on knowing Thee) the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

In righteousness, or, as we might say, through the Means of Grace, the Psalmist begins to behold the Presence of the Lord, and this vision of Holiness creates in him the thirst for holiness. The glimpse seen through the glass darkly has so inflamed his desire for fuller vision that " Hê cohortative " is joined to the word " satisfied " in the second clause to express the hope of satisfaction at the Great Awakening when he shall see face to face. Or as we may translate the verse—

" As for me, through the Means of Grace I begin to discern (and love) Thy Presence : Oh, let these beginnings be fully satisfied in the day when I shall wake (to find myself) in Thy Likeness."

Compare 1 S. John iii. 2. " Beloved now are we the sons of God : and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him : for we shall see Him as He is."

" Here faith is ours, and heavenly hope,
And grace to lead us higher ;
But there are perfectness and peace,
Beyond our best desire."

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

When this book was first started the writer wondered if he would be able to get together sufficient notes to make the book of a size worth publishing. Before the book was finished the only trouble was to know when to stop. The romance of the Hebrew language would not be exhausted by a work twice the size of this, but the patience of the reader might give out, and it is better to leave him with the appetite for a little more than with the feeling he has read a little too much. Consequently the chapter devoted to Hebrew idioms has been struck out, and all the notes on Hebrew weights and measures, by which such points as the height of Goliath and Og had been reduced to English feet and inches, and such mentions of money as the amounts spent on the Tabernacle and the Temple had been reduced to pounds sterling. The remarks that had been drawn up on Hebrew Synonyms and Paranomasia appeared to be of too technical a nature to interest an English reader, whilst the meaning and romance of names given in Scripture have been struck out, not because the subject was too technical, but far too grand for such scrappy treatment as a chapter would afford.

The aim of this book has not been to satisfy appetite on the points discussed, but to awaken it; not to fill any man's pitcher, but rather to show how clear and fresh are the waters of the spring if he will only go to the Wells of Scripture and fill the pitcher for himself. There certainly are many difficulties for the beginner to overcome when he first attempts to learn the Hebrew language, and it would require considerable ability to master these difficulties without a certain amount of oral instruction; but we read in D. M. Welton's *Life of John Lightfoot* that so far back as the days of Edward VI. even the ladies of England strove to excel in Hebrew study. The difficulties to-day are much less than they were then. Clearly printed Hebrew Bibles can now be bought at reasonable prices, whilst excellent grammars and lexicons place the language and its translation within reach of all who wish to take it up. The chief thing wanted, which this book has aimed at, is to show the vast Bible-reading public that the subject is worth taking up: a land that can produce such grapes as those presented is worth conquering; study of that language through which God first revealed His Will to mankind is part of the worship we owe to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. There was a time in the Church when the Old Testament was so painfully neglected in favour of the New Testament that an article was purposely added to the Creed to remind one and all of the origin of the ancient Oracles, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life . . . Who spake by the

Prophets." And who can doubt that it would inspire the Church with fresh life, and enthuse the individual with fonder respect for God's Word, if the same teaching was again emphasised? Close and indissoluble is the connexion that exists between the gift of Life and the Spirit who used these Prophets to reveal the Mind of the Deity in words of Hebrew speech. What men most need, says Hengstenberg, when speaking of the Psalms, and we may extend the saying to Scripture generally—

"What men now most of all need is to have the blenched Image of God again freshened up in them. And the more closely we connect ourselves with these sacred writings, the more will God cease to be to us a shadowy Form, which can neither hear, nor help, nor judge us, and to which we can present no supplication."

"Now these things were our examples," S. Paul tells the Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 6) when he refers them to the Hebrew Scriptures, and the chief glory of the Hebrew language is that it makes these examples live and move before us in a way that cannot fail to catch attention and suggest their moral. The life described, or the scene that is painted, ceases to be a passage of ancient history, and the mind is quickened by a sense of reality as the scene begins to live and move on the very pages that record the wondrous doings. It is as if a touch of spring passes over a lifeless landscape and makes all things new, the winter of past and cold indifference is ended, and the time of the singing of birds is come. It is not only that a new language is learned,

but the language is that one in particular which the Holy Spirit selected from all the languages on earth for His Incarnation. And it is not hard to perceive a remarkable prophecy of the world's revival in the faith and fear of God following a revival of the study of His written Word in Ps. cxlvii. 18, 19 (P.B.V.), "He sendeth out His word and melteth them: He bloweth with His wind, and the waters flow. He sheweth His word unto Jacob: His statutes and ordinances unto Israel." Our leaders tell us that there are signs of the winter breaking up. Christendom, they say, is on the eve of a great Revival, and the Psalmist tells us to expect that these things will come to pass when the Word goes forth to melt the frozen hearts of mankind, and the Wind, which is the Holy Spirit speaking in His own tongue, makes the waters of repentance to flow once again throughout Israel. To some, no doubt, it may appear a wild and fanciful idea that we should look in this way for a revival of Hebrew to bring about the Revival of Christendom, but it was the Old Testament to which the Apostolic writer was referring when he wrote (Heb. iv. 12), "For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of thoughts and intents of the heart." If such is the promise held out in Scripture of those who study the Old Testament in its original form, informing them that they will find in it a sharp two-edged sword that will

penetrate down to the very depths of their being, we can readily perceive how deep and striking must be the result when the being which is reached is no longer the isolated individual, but a whole nation waking up to the glory of its inheritance. We have heard with our ears, but we have yet to learn with our hearts, that the Bible is " the greatest treasure which the world contains," and this small attempt to explain something of its worth can best be concluded by a quotation from such an eminent scholar as Dr. C. A. Briggs—

" The Church is constantly learning new lessons of grace from the Scriptures. We have a right to expect still greater light to break forth from the Scriptures when the Church has been prepared to receive it. The Church did not attain its maturity at the Nicene Council. Augustine was not the highest achievement of Christian faith and experience. The Protestant Reformation did not introduce the Golden Age. A Church that is not growing in grace is a lukewarm if not a dead Church. A theology that is not progressive is a bed-ridden if not a dead theology. The Church needs a greater Reformation than it has ever yet enjoyed—a more extensive living in the Holy Spirit, a deeper quickening, a more extensive devotion in love and service to our Saviour and the interests of His kingdom. We are convinced that the seeds of such a Reformation are embedded in the Bible, only waiting a new spring time of the world to shoot forth. The Grace of God will reveal itself to another Luther and another Calvin at no very distant day in vastly greater riches and fulness, for the sanctification of the Church, and the preparation of the Bride for her Bridegroom."

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